

ACADEMIC LIBRARY PUBLISHING OF OPEN  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

By

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Abstract: Institutions and organizations perceiving the use and creation of Open Educational Resources (OER) as consistent with their values, experiences, and needs are developing partnerships in support of the creation and publication of OER (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2017; Schaffert, 2010). Open Educational Resources (OER) are “teaching, learning and research materials that make use of appropriate tools, such as open licensing, to permit their free reuse, continuous improvement and repurposing by others for educational purposes” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 9). Academic libraries are among the organizations advocating for OER, often playing a key campus role in education, advocacy, and support of their creation and publication (Bell, 2018; Lashley et al., 2017; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018). Publication of OER resonates with the role of the academic library (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2017; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019). Because “incongruence in perceptions” (Chtena, 2019, p. 24) can cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of OER, organizations involved in OER initiatives need familiarity with how OER and organizational values align. The goal of this dissertation was to investigate how academic libraries enact academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. Data collected in this single case study research project was analyzed through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The findings from the study suggest that, if academic libraries are to enact the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to its conception, those involved will need to be intentional about ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER. Future suggested research includes a multiple-case study comparative research study looking at academic library publication of OER, exploration of how opinion leaders and attributes of innovations impact academic library publication of OER, and investigation into the impact of organizational structure on the diffusion of OER creation and publication.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Institutions and organizations perceiving the use and creation of Open Educational Resources (OER) as consistent with their values, experiences, and needs are developing partnerships in support of the creation and publication of OER (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2017; Schaffert, 2010). Open Educational Resources (OER) are “teaching, learning and research materials that make use of appropriate tools, such as open licensing, to permit their free reuse, continuous improvement and repurposing by others for educational purposes” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 9). While there are different understandings, David Wiley provided one widely accepted description of the characteristics of OER in terms of 5Rs, which described users’ ability to legally interact with materials through their redistribution, reuse, revision, remixing, and retention, (Wiley, n.d.; Wiley & Hilton, 2018).

Enticed by the trending nature of OER and the potential they have for innovative pedagogy and affordable education (Soper et al., 2018), an array of organizations including “individual institutions, private funders, and government” (Hess et al., 2016, p. 133) are providing incentives for the publication of OER. However, the high levels of perceived compatibility between these organizations and OER may lead to its incorrect development and implementation (Rogers, 2003). For example, a university might implement development of OER to enhance the reputation (Jung et al., 2017) of the “institutional brand” (Sandy & Mattern, 2018, p. 342). By contrast, networks dedicated specifically to the support and creation of OER consider development of OER in terms of

serving the common good and democratizing access to knowledge (Bell, 2018; Lauritsen, 2019). Perhaps this phenomenon demonstrates that although perceived compatibility is an attribute that affects the adoption and diffusion of an innovation (Allan & Wolf, 1978), high levels of perceived compatibility “with a previously introduced idea can cause over adoption or misadoption” (Rogers, 2003, p. 244).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory facilitates the systematic study of “perceived attributes of innovations and their subsequent adoption” (Allan & Wolf, 1978, p. 332). Rogers (2003) described the innovation diffusion process as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 10). Users may choose to adopt an innovation after first having knowledge of the innovation and then being persuaded of its value (Sargent, 2014). Diffusion is the “social change” (Rogers, 2003, p. 6) that occurs as members of a social system “create and share information” (Rogers, 2003, p. 4) regarding the innovation.

Users contemplating an innovation will seek to eliminate uncertainty associated with the new idea or practice by developing knowledge of the innovation (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) identified five attributes of innovations whose perception help inform users’ choice regarding adoption of the innovation. Those attributes include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Rogers, 2003). The importance of these attributes to organizations’ adoption of an innovation may seem to explain the diffusion of OER in the partnerships described above, but reasons for unforeseen challenges may be left unknown (GO\_GN OER, 2019). For example: Are organizations and institutions enacting the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to its conception? Because “incongruence in perceptions” (Chtena, 2019, p. 24) can cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of OER, organizations involved in OER initiatives need familiarity with how OER and organizational values align.

Although much diffusion of innovation research has focused on the “innovation-decision process” (Rogers, 2003, p. 402) from the standpoint of individuals, the theory is applicable to the organizational innovation-decision process, as well. The organizational innovation-decision process is complex; it involves multiple stakeholders who will have varying perceptions regarding the attributes and value of the innovation (Rogers, 2003). Furthermore, Diffusion of Innovation Theory states that as organizations adopt and implement innovations, “both the innovation and the organization change in important ways” (Rogers, 2003, p. 403). These changes result in consequences to both the innovation and the organization, and in instances where compatibility is high, unforeseen consequences may take place (Rogers, 2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic libraries are among the organizations advocating for OER, often playing a key campus role in education, advocacy, and support of their creation and publication (Bell, 2018; Lashley et al., 2017; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018). Publication of OER resonates with the role of the academic library (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2017; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019). Throughout history, library patrons have copied, annotated, and otherwise interacted with library resources in ways strikingly similar to the 5Rs some consider definitive of OER (Battles, 2004; Lanke, 2011; Wiley & Hilton, 2018). Contextualizing the academic library’s role in supporting and publishing OER, Anderson et al. (2019) found publication of OER to be a continuation of the academic library’s role in “embrac[ing] open and accessible information sources for users” (p. 2). Hess et al. (2016) suggested academic library publishing of OER can provide a bridge between formal and informal learners, helping facilitate “inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all” (Miao, 2019, p. v).

Academic libraries, which are libraries intentionally aligned with a specific institution of higher education, are entering the OER publishing arena for a variety of reasons (Bell, 2018; Lashley et al., 2017; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018). These reasons include

existence of already established publishing infrastructure in academic libraries, perceived alignment of academic library mission with OER, institutional reputation, and as a response to commercial publishing (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Lashley et al., 2017; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018). Publication of OER by the academic library is “logistically convenient” (Kleymeer et al., 2010), and librarians have the know-how to navigate the increasing number of repositories and platforms hosting OER to help instructors find suitable, quality course materials (Hess et al., 2016). While the use of existing academic library publishing infrastructure is convenient, one question that arises is, does publishing through existing infrastructure result in changes to OER? Moreover, with many academic libraries publishing OER, how are academic libraries ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER?

Academic library publishing has provided a place for works and content “routinely ignored by other scholarly publishers” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 345). Just as academic libraries have historically helped users “with their unmet information needs” (Hawkins, 2019, p. 4), academic libraries are able to address unmet publication needs. In publishing faculty preprints, graduate student thesis and dissertations, and publication of conference volumes or festschriften (all types of publication representative of work that has either already undergone peer review or fits a niche need), material published by the contemporary academic library is distinguished (Schlosser et al., 2017) in its production of a “broad range of creative and intellectual outputs” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 345). This also may include materials whose publication process has been less traditional, such as “books, newspapers, etc., for public sale or distribution” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 340) as well as work that traditional commercial publishers determine “too long, too short, too esoteric, too expensive, too complicated or just too strange” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 345). Academic libraries are unrestricted by the need to appeal to a commercial audience, a characteristic that frees them to publish high-quality content despite unconventional subject matter, limited readership, or logistical publication challenges (Sandy et al., 2018).

Increasing cost and access restrictions have “encouraged libraries to explore alternative options for sharing scholarly research” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 339). Academic library publishing is becoming acceptable and recognized as an alternative to challenges associated with traditional methods for the publication of scholarly communication (Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018). As academic library publishing becomes more common, the question that arises is, do academic libraries publishing OER do so using the same processes they use to publish scholarly communication? Is there a way to determine if academic libraries should publish OER differently than they publish scholarly communications?

The literature reveals tension relevant to academic library publication of OER. These tensions result from traditional academic library practices as well as the academic library’s role in service to its affiliated university. The UNESCO Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies identified “equity, inclusion, collaboration and respect for diversity” (Miao et al., 2019 p. v) as values core to the development and use of OER; however, library knowledge structures have failed to “accurately and respectfully organize library materials about social groups and identities that lack social and political power” (Drabinski, 2013, p. 97). Universities affiliated with academic libraries claim commitment to excellence when describing the work of their students and scholars, using rhetoric that heightens “narratives of scarcity and competition” (Moore et al., 2017, p. 1), themes antithetical to those employed in reference to OER (Stacey & Pearson, 2017). Finally, academic library publishing of OER motivated primarily by an emphasis on textbook affordability may fail to attend to critical ethical and pedagogical concerns (Chtena, 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative research case study is to investigate how one academic library enacts academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. This dissertation research will investigate the following questions:

- How does the Midland State University Library enacts its academic library publishing program?

- How does the Midland State University Library publish OER?
- Why does the Midland State University Library publish OER?
- What are the differences (if any) in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER versus how the Midland State University Library publishes other work?

### **Why a Qualitative Research Case Study?**

Although the qualitative research case study methodology will be explained in depth in Chapter 3, it is beneficial to provide a brief answer here as to why the methodology is appropriate for this project. Much of the research regarding Diffusion of Innovations has followed the research methodology used by Ryan and Goss (1943) in their study of farmers' adoption of hybrid seed corn (Rogers, 2003; Rogers, 2004). This methodology incorporated "retrospective survey interviews" (Rogers, 2004, p. 15) in which those who have adopted innovations responded to questions related to the timing of the adoption, from whom they gained knowledge about the innovation, and what the consequences of adopting the innovation had been (Rogers, 2004). Rogers (2003), however, observed that quantitative diffusion research projects involving "gathering and analysis of cross-sectional data" (p. 196) posed limitations in that they measured human behavior at a single point in time. He proposed consideration of qualitative research methods that could provide insight into the "innovation-decision process" (p. 197), suggesting that qualitative data gathered over time could contribute a "dynamic perspective" (p. 196) and help further understanding of the diffusion of innovation process.

Why seek understanding? Adoption of innovations into social systems invariably results in consequences, not all of which are desirable (Allan & Wolf, 1978; Rogers, 2003; Rogers, 2004; Sharp, 1952). While quantitative diffusion research has enabled a degree of anticipation regarding consequences related to an innovation's "form and function," it has not provided thorough understanding of its "meaning for potential adopters" (Rogers, 2004, p. 451). Rogers (2004) defined meaning as "the subjective and frequently unconscious perception of an innovation by members of a social system" (p. 451). Organizations adopting innovations may attach meanings to those

innovations that are different from meanings the innovations “held in their original setting” (Rogers, 2004, p. 451). This can lead to changes “neither intended nor recognized by the members of a social system” (Rogers, 2004, p. 448). Greater understanding of how the innovation functions in relation to the “internal and external forces at work” in a social system can minimize undesirable consequences (Rogers, 2004, p. 449).

Rogers (2004) recommended use of “in-depth case study” (p. 441) when investigating consequences related to Diffusion of Innovations. Case study research is appropriate for projects asking how or why (Yin, 2019), as discovering answers to those questions requires “tracing operational processes over time” rather than collecting only information related to “frequencies or incidence” (p. 10). Case study research does not require control over behavioral events and facilitates the study of complex phenomena (Yin, 2019). Yin (2019) described case study research as effective for the study of a “real world case” for which “contextual conditions” are pertinent to understanding (p. 15).

Rogers (2004) noted the importance of context, as members of an organization interact to associate meaning to an innovation through the construction of “common understanding” (p. 428). Thus, consequences of an innovation should be judged from the perspective of the “user’s culture” (Rogers, 2004, p. 441). Rogers’ admonition supports the use of case study research for the exploration of perceived compatibility between academic library publishing and OER, a real-world situation taking place over time in which “phenomenon and context” may be intertwined (Yin, 2019, p. 15).

### **Academic Library Publishing as a Social System**

Academic library publishing of OER qualifies as an interaction of social system and innovation for which it is appropriate to attend to potential consequences (Rogers, 2003). Patton (2015) defined a system as “a whole which is both greater than and different from its parts” (p. 140). A social system,



then, is “a set of interrelated units involved in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal” (Rogers, 2003, p. 476).

Academic library publishing is a social system in which the academic library leads a set of activities with a common goal “to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works” (Brown, 2013, p. 470). Units within the system include people responsible to ensure discoverability of the work: librarians tasked to work in partnership with authors/creators to support and manage publication projects; administrators and editorial staff overseeing included content; specialists providing service related to graphic design, copyediting, software management, and curation of metadata; and the face and reputation of the academic library (Reed & Jahre, 2019) serving as the “official publisher of record” (Brown, 2013, p. 82). These units combine to create a whole working to “advance the missions of the universities in which they reside” (Bonn & Furlow, 2015, p. 5).

### **OER as an Innovation**

An innovation as defined within Diffusion of Innovation Theory is “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (Rogers, 2003, p. 475). Perception of newness carries greater weight than the objective reality of whether or not the “idea, practice or object” has previously been incorporated into practice (Rogers, 2003, p. 12). Newness can involve changes in knowledge, shifts in attitude, or “a decision to adopt” (Rogers, 2003, p. 12).

Academic library publication of OER necessitates changes in knowledge and shifts in attitude (Reed & Jahre, 2019). Rather than retaining sharing restrictions mandated by the full copyright under which creative works are by default released in the United States, OER are intentionally created and licensed to facilitate their distribution, modification, and retention at no additional cost to the end user (Bliss et al, 2017). Almeida (2017) explained OER in terms of “the use of intellectual property licenses and the internet to make instructional and research materials broadly accessible to those

within and outside of higher education communities” (p. 2). A way through which “the networked and distributed knowledge” of the internet (West, 2019, p. 236) can provide quality, affordable educational resources (Baker & Ippoliti, 2018), OER have been positioned as potentially fueling dramatic change in higher education infrastructure and practice (Almeida, 2017; Reed & Jahre, 2019). The shift from academic library publication of created materials under full copyright to publication of materials under broader licenses granting the sharing permissions that make OER possible is one aspect that constitutes a change in knowledge and attitude, qualifying academic library publishing of OER as an innovation. Academic library publication of OER indicates adoption of the innovation.

Interaction with the knowledge commons is another aspect of OER that characterizes it as an innovation within the sphere of academic library publishing. Hess (2012) described knowledge as a “shared resource, a complex ecosystem that is a commons” (p. 14). Stacey and Pearson (2017) defined commons as a social practice through which resources are managed “in a collective manner with a community of users” (p. 3). Central to the purpose of the academic library is a commitment to facilitating improved access to resources used for research and education in and beyond the local community (Kleymeer et al., 2010). Consideration of knowledge as a shared resource can improve access to materials as envisioned by the academic library; however, the practices for sharing work into the knowledge commons may be different from those practices established for sharing work as traditional scholarly communications. Therefore, publication of OER, work considered part of the knowledge commons, may require an innovative shift in attitude from publication of work considered scholarly communications.

### **Epistemological Perspective**

As a scholar conducting research in the field of educational technology, I need to be aware not only of my own personal assumptions about what constitutes knowledge and how we come to know what we know (Crotty, 1998) but also the assumptions and paradigms associated with educational technology as my chosen field of practice (Morgan, 2007). Epistemology can inform the choice of theoretical

framework or paradigm, defined by Morgan as “shared beliefs within a community of researchers” (2007, p. 53). Researchers may then choose from methods traditionally used by the field as associated with the theoretical framework to gather, analyze, report the findings as appropriate, and contribute suggestions for further exploration to be done in the field. This work is most credibly received by others when supported by considered, deliberate research design appropriate to the questions asked and conducted in a manner determined ethical and responsible by the broader research community.

This project is informed by a constructionist epistemology, which holds that meaning is constructed through interaction with other people and the world. Crotty described the constructionist view of knowledge as being “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 4). Constructionist-aligned researchers are communicating the assumption that objects are real, with meaning imputed to them as humans interact upon and with them. Knowledge is formed as humans interact with and upon the world and others around them. Those working from the theoretical perspectives aligned with constructionist epistemology are frequently conducting work whose aim is understanding.

### **Significance of Study**

The literature regarding academic library publishing of OER details projects from the perspective of library practice. This work will share understanding and findings from an educational technology perspective, a field that highlights the importance of “research and theory” as well as the “use of media for instructional purposes” (Reiser, 2001, p. 55). Guided by this definition, researchers in the field of educational technology have explored and continue to explore the role of media in learning as related to both product and process.

The use of OER and consideration of its impact on student learning invites attention from advocates as well as “skeptics and detractors” (Gurung, 2017, p. 79). Skepticism surrounding OER frequently involves questions regarding platforms, intellectual property rights, and pedagogy (Almeida, 2017). Researchers in the field of educational technology are equipped to address these questions as formal study of educational technology combines exploration of possibilities and potential of emerging technologies with the study of theory from fields including education, psychology, communications, as well as many others (Thompson, 2018). This breadth of study situates the field of educational technology as an appropriate discipline from which to pursue research informing the development and use of OER.

Researchers and educators in the field of educational technology are accustomed to integrated consideration of “their digital and pedagogical decisions” (Nascimbeni et al., 2018, p. 513) as they interact with both individual and collaborative areas of design practice. Almeida (2017) stated that with OER “distinctions between resources, platforms, and pedagogy are often collapsed” (p. 10). The digital resources in which OER are generally born have the potential to connect learners to each other and the subject under study in meaningful ways (Almeida, 2017). That potential is best realized through the use of informed processes and meaningful learning design (Almeida, 2017) – themes frequently combined in educational technology research.

While developing their framework for the implementation of open practices, Nascimbeni et al. (2018) found it was rare for any single individual to be accomplished across the four areas of the framework. The four areas Nascimbeni et al. (2018) used to articulate the framework include design, content, teaching, and assessment. Although a strong correlation has not been shown between openness and any specific “academic discipline” (Nascimbeni et al., 2018, p. 523), those practicing and researching from the field of educational technology will have developed skills associated with design, content, teaching, and assessment through their study of instructional design as enacted through implementation of media and teaching practices to impact learning.

Additionally, this qualitative research case study project will yield rich data through which readers may be able to transfer knowledge about academic library publishing policies and practices at the Midland State University Library to other contexts with which they are familiar. This study will inform further studies regarding academic library OER publishing policies and practices as well as studies clarifying the goals and values of practices involving OER.

### **Summary**

Academic libraries are among the institutions and organizations involved in the publication of OER, openly licensed teaching, and learning resources seen as an avenue through which “affordable access to culturally relevant education” can be provided to all (Hodgkinson-Williams & Trotter, 2018, p. 204). Commonalities between the mission of the academic library and the mission of OER make partnerships between academic libraries and those authoring OER “philosophically obvious” (Kleymeer et al., 2010, p. 3). While that may be the case, high levels of compatibility between OER and academic library publishing can lead to misuse of OER (Rogers, 2003). Does the high level of perceived compatibility between academic library publishing and OER result in changes to OER? Are academic libraries able to navigate their accountability to their affiliated universities in ways that preserve commons-associated values of OER? The persistent question this dissertation seeks to answer is: How does the Midland State University Library enact its academic library publishing program? Additionally, this qualitative research case study will shed light on academic library publishing practices and provide insight into areas in which the perceived compatibility between academic library publishing and OER may lead to changes in OER.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter aims to situate the dissertation study's research questions within the framework of Diffusion of Innovations Theory and present cases describing academic library publishing of OER. First, I will present research regarding the academic library and academic library publishing in order to provide context regarding the academic library and associated publishing practices. Next, I will present cases from the literature that describe academic library publishing programs and the factors motivating each academic library's involvement in OER publishing. Then, I will describe Diffusion of Innovations Theory, with particular focus on the innovation-decision process in which knowledge must be gained as individuals and other units of decision making determine whether to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 2003). Finally, I will detail how OER is characterized in current research to provide information regarding their definition, description, and motivations for OER creation and use.

## **The Academic Library**

Academic libraries are entering the OER publishing arena for a variety of reasons (Evans, 2018; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018; Turner & Billings, 2019; Sobotka et al., 2019; VanScoy, 2019). These reasons include already established publishing infrastructure, perceived alignment of academic library mission with OER (Anderson et al., 2019; Evans, 2018; Jung et al., 2017; VanScoy, 2019), institutional reputation (Turner & Billings, 2019; Schaffert, 2010), and as a response to commercial publishing (Evans, 2018; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Larivière et al., 2015). Publication of OER by the academic library is “logistically convenient” (Kleymeer et al., 2010, p. 242), and librarians have the know-how to navigate the increasing number of repositories and platforms hosting OER to help instructors find suitable, quality course materials (Hess et al., 2016; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sobotka et al., 2019; Turner & Billings, 2019).

## **What is an Academic Library?**

As the purpose of this dissertation is to explain academic library publishing of OER, it is appropriate to ask the question, what is an academic library? An academic library is a library intentionally aligned with a specific institution of higher education (Lankes et al., 2016). The American Library Association defines the academic library as a library in service to a college or university (“Academic Libraries”, n.d.). Similarly, the Association of College and Research Libraries describes the primary mission of the academic library as support of the research and learning of the institution with which it is affiliated (Connaway et al., 2017). In addition to supporting the research and learning of the institution of higher education with which it is aligned (“Changing Roles”, 2018; Connaway et al., 2017; Sobotka et al., 2019; Turner & Billings, 2019), the academic library “proactively speed[s] the scholarly conversation” (Lankes et al., 2016, p. 131). Academic library faculty engage in research agendas including “scholarly publishing,

information literacy, preservation of records and metadata, and how knowledge creation and information shape higher education and society” (Lankes et al., 2016, p. 132).

### **The Role of the Library**

The mission of the academic library is tied directly to the mission of the institution with which it is affiliated (Bonn & Furlough, 2015; Connaway et al., 2017; Evans, 2018; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Lankes et al., 2016; Sobotka et al., 2019). The academic library serves as “part of a culture and community dedicated to learning” (Lankes et al., 2016, p. 131) while continuing to honor the values of librarianship as a whole (Elmborg, 2011; Hoops & Hare, 2019; Kleymeer et al., 2010). Lankes (2011) presents the mission of the library as the improvement of society through the facilitation of knowledge creation in its community. The academic library community is composed primarily of the affiliated institution’s faculty, instructors, and students (Kleymeer et al., 2010; Lankes et al., 2016); however, for some institutions the community served extends beyond direct campus stakeholders into the surrounding counties and state (“Land-Grant University”, n.d.). Librarians facilitate conversations between and among community members (Elmborg, 2011; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019) and artifacts, such as books that “result from knowledge activity” (Lankes, 2011, p. 41). The role of the academic library is fulfilled, in part, through provision of access to both the process and product of “scholarly, educational, and historical materials” (Kleymeer et al., 2010, p. 3).

The concept of access as understood in librarianship is one not only of procurement but also includes community members’ ability to enter the results of their own scholarship and creative work into the conversation (Lankes, 2011; Rush et al., 2018). The modern library encourages conversational give and take by collaborating with community members to bring “the world to the local community and to [bring] the local community to the world” (Hawkins, 2019, p. 3). This can be seen specifically in academic library publishing (Bonn & Furlough, 2015;



Kleymeer et al., 2010), where libraries embrace “stewarding roles for campus scholarly output” (Sandy & Mattern, 2018, p. 345).

### **Academic Library Publishing**

The Library Publishing Coalition defined academic library publishing as “the set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly creative and/or educational works” (Sandy & Mattern, 2018, p. 7). Academic library publishing is mission-driven (Evans, 2018; Kleymeer et al., 2010) and guided by “core library values” (Hoops & Hare, 2019, p. 3). Academic library publishing can be categorized into three compartments: partnership with a university press, scholarly publishing, and general academic library publishing.

### ***University Press***

A university press meets stringent organizational requirements, enables dissemination of faculty work, and serves to improve institutional prestige through publication of the work of affiliated scholars (Bonn & Furlough, 2015; Courant & Jones, 2015; Jagodzinski, 2008; Kerr, 1949; Schlossberger, 1943). The earliest university press publishing programs were created within academic libraries (Bonn & Furlough, 2015; Jagodzinski, 2008; Sandy & Mattern, 2018) in response to researchers’ desire for alternatives “to conventional publishers” (Hawkins, 2019, p. 2). Prior to the establishment of university presses, academic research had to fight for space (Jagodzinski, 2008) within a “publishing industry that found the academic market too small to bother with” (Bonn & Furlough, 2015, p. vii). In addition to publication of faculty work and academic research, a university press might publish trade books or other works of local interest in order to generate profit for the institution (Courant & Jones, 2015).

In 1937, several North American university presses formalized the profession through the creation of the Association of American University Presses (Courant & Jones, 2015; Jagodzinski,

2008; Kerr, 1949; Schossberger, 1943). This professional organization established stringent “ground rules for academic presses” (Schossberger, 1943, p. 96). These qualifications specified employment of designated staff, established minimum publishing quotas, and required the press be directly connected to university administration (Courant & Jones, 2015; Jagodzinski, 2008; Kerr, 1949; Schossberger, 1943).

### ***Scholarly Publication***

Scholarly publication includes publication of original, peer-reviewed research output (Hawkins, 2019; Sandy & Mattern, Schlosser et al., 2017; Taylor & Billings, 2019). Scholarly publication takes place within academic library publishing in the form of a “scholarly communication ecosystem” (Sandy & Mattern, 2018, p. 339), which includes nontraditional publishing models such as institutional repositories, faculty driven journals, monographs, and publications for external groups (Turner & Billings, 2019; Schlosser et al., 2017). Publication as scholarly communication through the academic library helps “shape the content and [provides] a level of certification to the content published” (Hawkins, 2019, p. 2). An example of academic library publishing within the scholarly communication ecosystem is the publishing of theses or dissertations produced by university graduate students or faculty journal article preprints published in an affiliated institutional repository (Taylor & Billings, 2019). The work has undergone rigorous review outside of the academic library publishing process: theses and dissertations are thoroughly vetted by students’ committees, and preprints represent articles that have undergone peer review at the level of preliminary journal acceptance (Tennant et al., 2017).

Scholarly publishing includes the Open Access publication of research articles (Mishra, 2017). Open Access (OA) describes free, unrestricted online dissemination of peer-reviewed journal articles (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002; Mishra, 2017) in ways that permit users to “read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full text” (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002, p. 3). Works described as OA within the academic library scholarly publishing

ecosystem are original research articles that have undergone rigorous peer review outside of the academic library publishing process (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002; Mishra, 2017).

### ***General Academic Library Publishing***

General academic library publishing incorporates all other types of work published through the academic library (Kleymeer et al., 2010; Schlosser et al., 2018). Efforts associated with general academic library publishing are embedded “within the teaching mission of the library and their parent organizations” (Schlosser et al., 2018, p. x), taking place as part of the academic library’s engagement with teaching and learning (Kleymeer et al., 2010). Examples of these publications include faculty and instructor teaching materials, undergraduate student capstone projects, and collaborations between digital humanities and archives scholars (Kleymeer et al., 2010; Schlosser et al., 2018).

There are instances, however, when the boundaries between the three compartments of academic library publishing are blurred. For instance, an academic library affiliated with a Midwestern research university provided digital publication of textbooks written by faculty (Baker & Ippoliti, 2019). The site housing these digital publications was formally called the library ePress (Baker & Ippoliti, 2019). The title implied a university press, but the publishing project did not meet the “ground rules for university presses” (Schossberger, 1943, p. 96) established by the Association of American University Presses.

### **Case Studies**

In academic libraries, there is a perceived overlap between OER and Open Access (OA) (Bell, 2018; Reed & Jahre, 2019). In the cases described below, responsibility for OER support, advocacy, education, and oversight of publication falls within the academic libraries’ scholarly communications divisions (Hess et al., 2016; VanScoy, 2019), which are already “maintaining the

infrastructure to shift to OA [Open Access]” (VanScoy, 2019, p. 4), suggesting that “in the world of higher education teaching, OER is the corollary to OA in scholarship” (p. 4).

Midland State University Libraries have been involved in academic library publishing since 2006 (Schlosser 2017). Publishing is organized in a central academic library publishing department with a strong emphasis on open publishing. In 2013, the Midland State University Libraries began the Midland State Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative in response to concerns about the financial burden students were experiencing (Delimont et al., 2016; Lashley et al., 2017). The Midland State University Libraries include expansion of their OER publishing as a stated goal, with an immediate goal of 3-5 OER publications completed by the end of 2020 (Schlosser, 2017).

The Michigan State University Course Materials Program operates as part of the MSU Libraries to “assist faculty with the entire process of course pack creation and production” (Smeltekop, 2014, p. 26). The program developed in response to concerns regarding the amount of material in commercially published course packs that went unused by faculty; the packs aim to balance the cost of materials and the “pedagogical value of that content for faculty and students” (Smeltekop, 2014, p. 26). The Course Materials Program originally operated independent of the Library but was rolled under the umbrella of academic library partnerships when the on-campus printing program with which it was originally affiliated was eliminated (Smeltekop, 2014). Partnership with the Library is seen to have strengthened the program’s ability to serve the campus, in particular as subject librarians lend expertise to content procurement and development and the academic library environment facilitates meaningful engagement with faculty and students (Smeltekop, 2014).

The Open SUNY textbook publishing program was created by the Geneseo Milne Library in direct response to financial challenges experienced by the institutions and their

students (Pitcher, 2014). The SUNY Geneseo Milne Library is affiliated with a four-year liberal arts college. The Library used a \$20,000 grant awarded by the SUNY Instructional Technology Grant program to “create an open publishing system” (Pitcher, 2014, p. 22), which would fold into the academic library’s “existing infrastructure” (p. 22) and faculty relationships. Grant funding was used to fund financial incentive for open textbook authorship, peer review, and to establish an “editorial and review system for authors, reviewers, and librarians” (Pitcher, 2014, p. 22). The Open SUNY Textbook program sought to create and publish open textbooks in partnership with faculty and students, and the development of a replicable infrastructure and process framework for use by others working toward similar goals (Pitcher, 2014).

Oregon State University is a land-grant institution whose open textbook publishing program began as a partnership between the “Oregon State University Libraries and Press and the Open Educational Resources and Emerging Technologies unit of Oregon State University’s Extended Campus” (Sutton & Chadwell, 2014, p. 34). The Oregon State University Libraries and Press operate and publish independently within the same organization but are brought together in the publication of open textbooks “in an innovative way that leverages their shared expertise” (Sutton & Chadwell, 2014, p. 35). Publication of open textbooks is considered in alignment with the “shared mission of academic libraries to remove barriers to the free flow of information in support of teaching and learning” (Sutton & Chadwell, 2014, p. 35) as well as Oregon State University’s land-grant mission, which includes a commitment to increasing access to higher education for communities across the state (Sutton & Chadwell, 2014).

The Temple University Library’s Alternative Textbook Project (Allen et al., 2014) partners the institution’s Teaching Learning and Technology Roundtable to provide financial incentive and platform support encouraging faculty to develop and adopt “alternatives to textbooks” (Walz, 2015, p. 26). The University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, identifying OER as appropriate for inclusion in their “scholarly communication portfolio” (Allen et al., 2014,

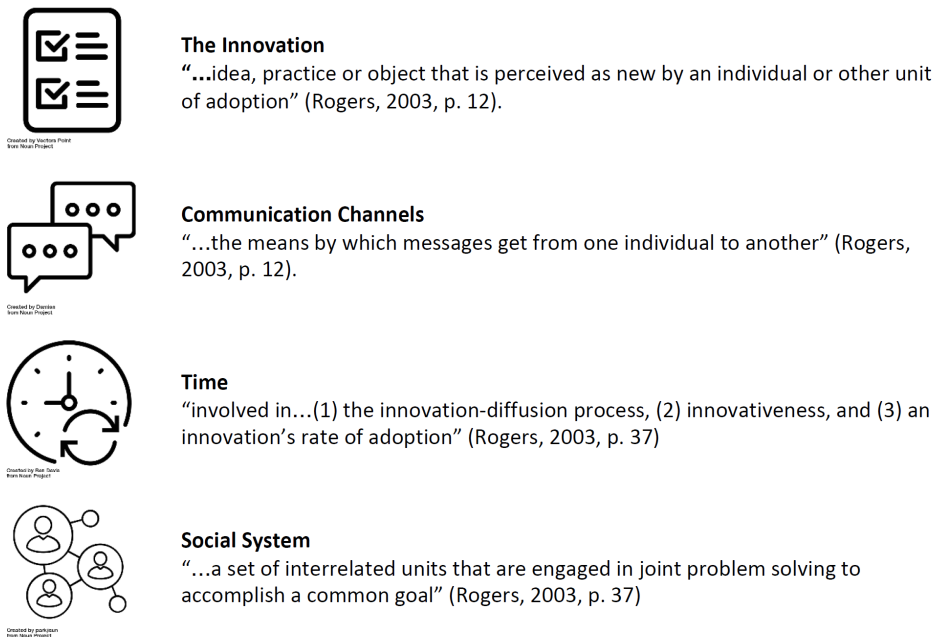
p. 4), appealed to the faculty commitment to student success in an effort to transform campus textbook practices. The involvement of Temple University Library and the University of Massachusetts Amherst Library in OER publishing grew out of their each having played “a transformative role in shaping the campus conversation on access to research” (Allen et al., 2014, p. 2).

### Diffusion of Innovations

Diffusion of Innovations Theory provides a lens through which researchers can make meaning of the innovation diffusion process through which ideas are socially communicated over time (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) provided a broad description of the innovation diffusion process in terms of four elements. Those four elements, defined in Figure 1, are the innovation, communication, time, and the social system (Rodés et al., 2013; Rogers, 2003).

**Figure 1**

*Graphical depiction of the four elements of the diffusion process (Rogers, 2003)*



## **Innovation Development Process**

Prior to the innovation-decision process, individuals or organizations will have gone through all or some portion of the innovation development process (Rogers, 2003). This nonlinear process may include recognition of a problem or need, basic and applied research, development, commercialization, diffusion and adoption, and consequences (Rogers, 2003).

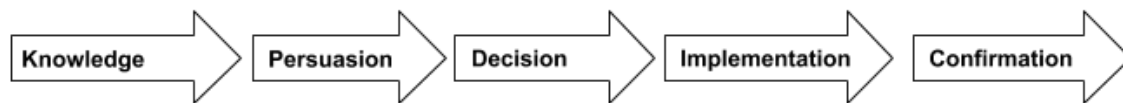
The innovation development process includes recognition of a problem or a need (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) defined a need as a “state of dissatisfaction or frustration that occurs when an individual’s desires outweigh the individual’s actualities” (p. 173). Rogers (2003) argued that research is inconclusive regarding whether need or awareness comes first in the diffusion of innovations but pointed out that “change agents may create needs among their clients by pointing out the existence of desirable new ideas” (p. 172), who will then enter the innovation-decision process. The innovation-decision process is described in the following section.

## **The Innovation-Decision Process**

Individuals and organizations considering adoption of an innovation “reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of an innovation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 14) by passing through an innovation-decision process. The five stages (see Figure 2) of the innovation-decision process are knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 2003).

**Figure 2**

*The five stages of the innovation-decision process (Rogers, 2017).*



**Knowledge.** During the knowledge stage, potential adopters learn of the innovation’s existence and gain information about the innovation (Rogers, 2003). The knowledge stage of the innovation-decision process involves three types of knowledge: what, how-to, and why (Rogers, 2003). “What” is described as awareness knowledge gained as the individual receives “information that the innovation exists” (Rogers, 2003, p. 173). This answer to the question “What is the innovation” may motivate the individual to seek knowledge related to “how-to” and “why” (Rogers, 2003). “How-to” knowledge is the type of information necessary for proper use of the innovation (Rogers, 2003). “Why” knowledge brings understanding of the “functioning principles underlying how an innovation works” (Rogers, 2003, p. 173). Innovations can be adopted without individuals or organizations having gained principles knowledge, but adoption of an innovation without principles knowledge brings with it the possibility of misuse (Rogers, 2003).

**Persuasion.** During the persuasion stage, potential adopters form an opinion about the use of the innovation in their local context (Rogers, 2003). The persuasion stage of the innovation-decision process involves a type of “affective (or feeling)” thinking (Rogers, 2003, p. 175), which stands in contrast to the “mainly cognitive (or knowing) type of thinking” (p. 175) taking place during the knowledge stage. During the persuasion stage, individuals form “a favorable or unfavorable



attitude toward the innovation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 174). It is during this phase that the attributes of the innovation as perceived by the individual are particularly important (Rogers, 2003). The individual actively seeks new information regarding the innovation and makes decisions about what messages are credible and how to interpret received information, engaging in selective perception that is “important in determining the individual’s behavior” (Rogers, 2003, p. 175) regarding the innovation’s relative advantage in their particular situation.

**Decision.** Following the persuasion stage of the innovation-decision process, individuals and organizations engage in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation (Rogers, 2003). These activities can include a trial of the innovation on a small-scale, “probationary basis to determine its usefulness in their own situation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 177). Individuals and organizations may also draw conclusions regarding the local usefulness of an innovation by observing a peer’s or other institution’s trial of the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

**Implementation.** Rogers (2003) described the implementation stage as the point in the innovation-decision process when individuals and organizations put “an innovation into use” (p. 474). Implementation follows the decision stage and takes place when the “decision making unit” (Rogers, 2003, p. 179) has determined that the innovation’s relative advantage in their particular situation warrants its use. The implementation stage may take place quickly or over a longer period of time, depending on the nature of both the innovation and the situation into which it is being implemented (Rogers, 2003). The implementation stage is considered concluded once its identity as a “new idea disappears” (Rogers, 2003, p. 180) and the innovation is no longer apparent as distinctive or separate.

**Confirmation.** During the confirmation stage of the innovation-decision process, the decision-making unit continues to seek information regarding the innovation and its use in their particular context (Rogers, 2003). To avoid dissonance regarding implementation of the innovation,

individuals may choose “selective exposure” (Rogers, 2003, p. 190), attending only to information that confirms implementation. If information gathered during the confirmation stage fails to reinforce the “innovation-decision already made” (Rogers, 2003, p. 189), the decision to implement the innovation may be reversed.

### **Attributes of Innovations**

The relative rate and speed of the adoption and diffusion of innovation can be predicted based on individuals’ perceptions of the characteristics, or attributes, of the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability have been identified as the five attributes of innovations impactful in the diffusion process (Rogers, 2003).

**Relative advantage.** Rogers (2003) described the relative advantage of an innovation as the “degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes” (p. 229). According to Rogers (2003), the perceived relative advantage could relate to the innovation’s economic impact, social prestige ascribed to those using the innovation, “or in other ways” (p. 229). Both the nature of the innovation and the characteristics of those considering adoption of the innovation play a role in the perceived relative advantage of an innovation (Rogers, 2003).

**Compatibility.** Compatibility is the “degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters” (Rogers, 2003, p. 240). People exploring adoption of an innovation may seek to reduce uncertainty by considering innovations whose characteristics and values resemble “previously introduced ideas” (Rogers, 2003, p. 240). An innovation’s perceived compatibility with existing “sociocultural values and beliefs” (Rogers, 2003, p. 240) aids the adopter in determining how well the innovation might meet perceived needs and fit into the local context.

**Complexity.** The perceived complexity of an innovation is “the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use” (Rogers, 2003, p. 257). Simply put,

perceived complexity addresses whether or not potential adopters have a clear understanding of the innovation's meaning in their local context (Rogers, 2003). Perceived complexity surfaces less consistently than relative advantage or compatibility in research exploring adoption of innovations, but Rogers (2003) offered a generalization stating that “the complexity of an innovation, as perceived by members of a social system, is negatively related to its rate of adoption” (p. 257).

**Trialability.** Individuals and organizations may draw conclusions regarding the local usefulness of an innovation in part based on its perceived trialability (Rogers, 2003). Trialability is “the degree to which an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis” (Rogers, 2003, p. 258). Innovations that are perceived by individuals as available for experimentation “on a limited basis” (Rogers, 2003, p. 258) are adopted more rapidly than those that are not.

**Observability.** Rogers (2003) referred to the “degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others” (p. 16) as perceived observability. For individuals in the innovation-decision process, the perceived ability to see the results of an innovation's implementation in contexts similar to their local context can improve communication and reduce uncertainty surrounding the innovation (Rogers, 2003). High levels of perceived observability improve an innovation's chances for adoption (Rogers, 2003).

### **DOI across Research Traditions**

A study of the diffusion of the use of hybrid seed corn in planting by Iowa farmers (Ryan & Gross, 1943) is considered a seminal work that “influenced the methodology, theoretical framework, and interpretations” (Rogers, 2003, p. 55) of subsequent diffusion scholars across research traditions, including anthropology, sociology, education, public health, communication, marketing and management, and geography, among others. Diffusion research in the field of education (Jung et al., 2017) can trace its “roots to research in the 1920s and 1930s” (Rogers,

2003, p. 61), exploring the relationship between local school control and innovativeness.

Diffusion research in education continues to be used to make meaning of the teacher and school administrator experience, differences in diffusion within schools and between schools, and as a “means of evaluating various diffusion initiatives carried out by government agencies” (Rogers, 2003, p. 62). A January 2020 search of the ProQuest database using the key terms “librar\*” [TI] and “Diffusion of Innovations” returned 38 results, suggesting that the use of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory has generalized to the field of library science.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory proffers that high levels of perceived compatibility between an innovation and the individual or social system adopting the innovation can hasten adoption and diffusion of the innovation (Hodgkinson-Williams & Paskevicius, 2013; Rogers, 2003). This dissertation study is concerned with whether the high level of perceived compatibility between academic library publishing and OER leads to changes in OER. Diffusion of Innovations Theory is an appropriate theoretical framework with which to make meaning of this exploration of OER publication (Hodgkinson-Williams & Paskevicius, 2012; Raneri & Young, 2016; Rodes et al., 2013; VanScoy, 2019) as an innovation diffused through the academic library social system (Baker & Ippoliti, 2019).

### **Open Educational Resources**

Open Educational Resources (OER) are “teaching, learning and research materials that make use of appropriate tools, such as open licensing, to permit their free reuse, continuous improvement and repurposing by others for educational purposes” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 9). Course integration of OER can transform the student learning experience by improving student access to materials and facilitate dynamic learning contexts (Conole & Brown, 2018; Koseoglu & Bozkurt, 2018; Miao et al., 2019; Raneri & Young, 2016; Pitt, 2015; West, 2018). Typically born digital, the potential of OER to improve access to materials and facilitate dynamic learning contexts results

in part from licensing that supports a broader default flexibility of use than is allowed by full copyright (Annand, 2015; Mishra, 2017; Wiley et al., 2014). This licensing clearly communicates the creators' intent that the learning resource may be distributed, modified, and retained at no additional cost to the end user (Mishra, 2017; Wiley et al., 2014). As a result, removal of the cost barrier associated with commercial textbooks can improve student access to learning materials, and the learning context is less constrained by the rigidity of commercial textbook design (Miao et al., 2019; Pitt, 2015).

### **OER and Pedagogy**

Hodgkinson-Williams and Trotter (2018) identified provision of “affordable access to culturally relevant education to all” (p. 204) as a central tenet of the OER movement. Rivera et al. (2019) found that instructors see adapting or creating OER as “an opportunity to improve student learning” (p. 720). Incorporation of OER into teaching practices facilitates innovative pedagogies that can improve student access to meaningful learning opportunities (Soper et al., 2018). The openly licensed characteristics of OER allows instructors to develop a learning ecology in which students and instructors are immersed in collaborative teaching and learning interactions (Koseoglu & Bozkurt, 2018). Educators are able to employ their own subject-matter expertise to update content, modify resources to reflect the community in which the course is being taught, and create bespoke interactions to complement classroom teaching and learning preferences.

### **The Emergence of OER**

While it is difficult to establish at what point educators began incorporating OER-like materials into their teaching (Downes, 2012), the term “open educational resources” is documented as having been first “coined” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 10) at the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries 2002 (Hess et al., 2016; Mishra, 2017; Miao et al., 2019).

**Figure 3**

*International documents contributing to the development and codification of OER definition*

*(Miao et al., 2019).*

<b>Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries 2002</b>	In 2002, UNESCO convened a group of academics, primarily from developing countries, to discuss a new development: the OpenCourseware initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At this meeting, the term ‘open educational resources’ was coined.
<b>Cape Town Declaration 2008</b>	In 2007, an international forum convened by the Open Society Institute and the Shuttleworth Foundation led to the Cape Town Declaration. The aim of this meeting was to accelerate efforts to promote open resources, technology and teaching practices in education. In 2018, the CPT+10 was published to celebrate the society’s ten-year anniversary. It identified ten key directions to move open education forward.
<b>Paris Declaration 2012</b>	In 2012, UNESCO convened the first World Open Educational Resources Congress, which resulted in the Paris Declaration, containing ten recommendations for how states can promote the use of OER.
<b>Mauritius Communique 2012</b>	Also in 2012, delegations from thirty-nine Commonwealth countries met in Pailles, Mauritius to reflect on the theme ‘Education in the Commonwealth: Bridging the Gap as We Accelerate Towards Achieving Internationally Agreed Goals’. They highlighted the need to set up a common platform for OER for harmonisation, ease of access, and the development and use of OER to provide quality teaching and learning for all.
<b>Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 2015</b>	In 2015, UNESCO together with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organised the World Education Forum in Incheon, hosted by the Republic of Korea. This document made two references to OER in relation to increasing the quality and accessibility of teaching and learning through OER materials.
<b>Qingdao Declaration (Levering ICT to Achieve Education 2030) 2015/Qingdao Statement 2017</b>	In 2015 (with follow-up in 2017), an international conference on ICT and education was held in Qingdao, China. The resulting Qingdao Declaration (2015) dedicates a section to ‘open solutions’ and sees OER as improving the quality of and access to materials, as well as catalysing the innovative use of content for learning and fostering knowledge creation. The Qingdao Statement of 2017 sees OER as contributing to unlocking the potential of ICT for better teaching and learning.
<b>Kuala Lumpur Declaration 2016</b>	In 2016, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration was adopted at the Eighth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8). With reference to the Charter of the Commonwealth 2013, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO’s Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, Education 2030, and the 2012 UNESCO–COL Paris Declaration on Open Educational Resources, it presents a set of recommendations, including mainstreaming the use of OER by developing strategies and policies at governmental and institutional levels to enhance quality while potentially reducing the cost of education.
<b>Ljubljana Action Plan 2017</b>	In 2017, the Second World Open Educational Resources Congress was co-organised by UNESCO and the Government of Slovenia, which resulted in an Action Plan with forty-one recommendations for action.

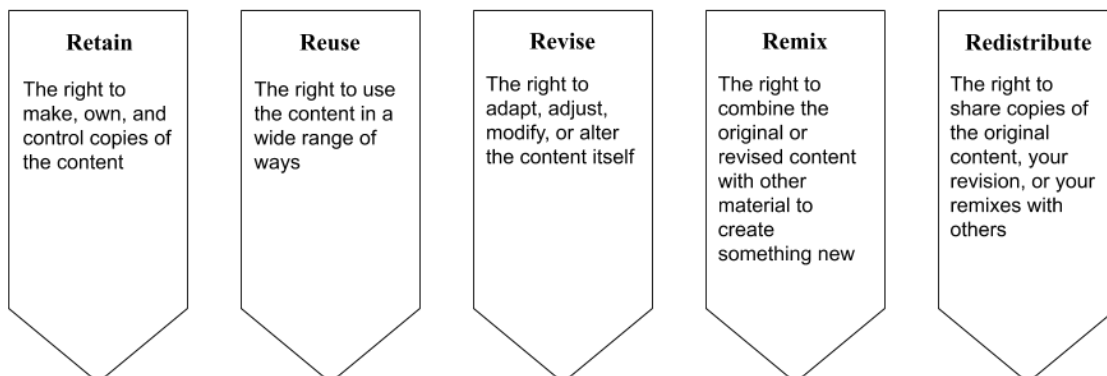
The 2002 UNESCO Forum definition of OER as “technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes” helped fuel the proliferation of OER (Hess et al., 2016, p. 129). Figure 3 describes international documents that have further contributed to the development and codification of the definition of OER.

### **The 5Rs**

As the documents in Figure 4 built upon the 2002 UNESCO Forum definition and helped shape understanding of OER and how it might relate to policy (Miao et al., 2019), David Wiley developed a description (see Figure 4) of the characteristics of OER that helped shape understanding of OER and how it might relate to practice (Bell, 2018; Conole & Brown, 2018; Rivera et al., 2019; Wiley, n.d.; Wiley et al., 2014). Wiley described OER as characterized by users’ ability to legally interact with the materials through their redistribution, reuse, revision, and remixing (Ovadia, 2019; Wiley, n.d.; Wiley et al., 2014).

### **Figure 4**

*Graphical depiction of David Wiley’s 5Rs*



These characteristics became known as the ‘4Rs’ (Conole & Brown, 2018; Ovadia, 2019).

Wiley’s later addition of ‘retain’ helped clarify users’ nonexclusive right to indefinite retention of materials (Baker, 2019; Conole & Brown, 2018), and reference to “the five Rs” became a way through which classroom use of OER could be clearly envisioned and communicated (Veletsianos, 2015; Wiley, 2020). Each of the 5Rs is presented in further detail below.

**Retain.** The right to retain a resource permits end-users to engage in practices such as downloading and keeping a copy of their own (Wiley, 2020). This right goes beyond provision of access and permits users to interact with the resource in locations other than its original site of publication (Wiley, 2020), retaining control over their own copy (Baker, 2019). For instance, the right to retain allows users to make copies of the resource or post the actual resource inside the course learning management system rather than being required to post a link to the original publication (Wiley, 2020).

**Reuse.** The right to reuse a resource permits end-users to engage in practices such as the public use of their own “original, revised, or remixed copy of the resource” (Wiley, 2020, n.p.). The right to reuse allows for use of unchanged or modified versions of the resource in other contexts (Baker, 2019) such as on websites, in class, or in public presentations (Wiley, 2020).

**Revise.** The right to revise a resource permits end-users to engage in practices such as changing the file type (creating an audio recording of a print resource) or translating “the content into another language” (Wiley et al., 2014, p. 782). The right to revise permits changes to the resource to enhance its relevance to local populations or the teaching and learning needs of particular communities (Baker, 2019; Cronin, 2017; Wiley, 2020; Wiley et al., 2014).

**Remix.** The right to remix a resource permits end-users to engage in practices such as mashing a variety of resources together (Wiley, 2020). For example, instructors may wish to combine aspects of multiple texts rather than using only one or all of each (Baker, 2019). The right to



remix allows for the creation of a new resource including excerpts from other works (Baker, 2019; Wiley, 2020).

**Redistribute.** The right to redistribute a resource permits end-users to engage in practices such as posting copies online or sharing copies with others (Baker, 2019; Wiley, 2020). While similar to the right to reuse, the right to redistribute specifies the end users' right to create and disseminate copies rather than simply directing others to the site of publication (Wiley, 2020). Wiley (2020) recommended the default degree to which creators wished to align their resources with the 5R enabled practices be easily designated with Creative Commons Licenses (Bell, 2018; Ovadia, 2019; Wiley, Bliss & McEwan, 2014; Wiley, 2020).

### **Creative Commons**

In the late 1990s, Larry Lessig and Eric Eldred partnered with others to create nonprofit organization Creative Commons in response to a “mismatch between what technology enables and what copyright restricts” (Creative Commons, 2020, p. 2). As the affordances of digital technology led to a “growing community [. . .] who were creating, remixing, and sharing content” (Creative Commons, 2020, p. 2), creators began to experience tension between their ability to share their work and “restrictions embedded within copyright laws around the world” (Creative Commons, 2020, p. 2). The Creative Commons organization wanted to provide a way for creators to share their work “in ways that were consistent with copyright law” (Creative Commons, 2020, p. 4).

The Creative Commons Licenses were established in 2002 to provide a way for creators to easily communicate their intent to allow users' interaction with created materials in ways more flexible than those allowed by full copyright (Schaffert, 2010). The Creative Commons Licenses are particularly helpful in places such as the United States, where any created work is by default under full copyright the instant it takes tangible form (Creative Commons, 2020). For works

under full copyright, permission is required from creators for legal distribution, modification, or retention of the work (Schaffert, 2010). Full copyright as honored in the United States affords creators protection in that it prevents reproduction of their work without their permission and possible compensation; however, it can create barriers for creators who wish to share their work for more flexible use. The Creative Commons Licenses help reduce these barriers (Bell, 2018; Mishra, 2017; Ovadia, 2019; Schaffert, 2010; VanScoy, 2019).

### **The Commons**

As releasing work under a Creative Commons license positions the work as being in the commons, one might ask, “What *are* the commons?” Bollier (2016) described the commons as “a paradigm, a discourse, an ethic, and a set of social practices” (p. 2). Also understood as “things that no one owns and are shared by everyone” (Macrae, 2017, p. 2), the term commons is used as both a noun and a verb to describe a collaborative space in which human relationships interweave to manage resources (Bollier, 2014, 2016; Macrae, 2017; Moore et al., 2017; Jeong, 2018; Stacy & Pearson, 2017; Taylor & Billings, 2019). Commons arise when a community elects to work together to produce and govern a resource or resources (Bollier, 2014, 2016; Moore et al., 2017; Jeong, 2018; Stacy & Pearson, 2017).

Commons resources are managed by those directly involved (Ovadio, 2019; Stacey & Pearson, 2017). Creators can place their work into the commons without first obtaining permission from the state or market (Stacey & Pearson, 2017). As described by Stacey and Pearson (2017), participants in the commons can determine for themselves the level and extent to which they wish to be involved, and the rules and norms are “defined by the community” (p. 7). As the community defines the rules and norms governing the commons, they “weigh individual costs and benefits against the costs and benefits to the whole community” (Stacey & Pearson, 2017, p. 7), considering equity, sustainability, and economic efficiency. The goal of the commons

is to maximize “access, equity, distribution, participation, innovation, and sustainability” (Stacey & Pearson, 2017, p. 7). Success is measured in terms of how many people “access and use a resource, how users are distributed across gender, income, and location; if a community to extend and enhance the resources is being formed; and if the resources are being used in innovative ways for personal and social good” (Stacey & Pearson, 2017, p. 7).

Personal and social good is a motivating factor for creators releasing their work as OER (Hodgkinson-Williams & Paskevicius, 2012; Pitt, 2015; Wiley et al., 2014). As described above, use of OER can improve student access to materials and facilitate dynamic learning contexts. While increased student access to materials is easily understood in terms of financial barriers (Anderson et al., 2019; Baker, 2019; Bell, 2018; Burke, 2019; Clinton & Khan, 2019; Grimaldi et al., 2019; Hilton, 2019; Lashley et al., 2017; Raneri & Young, 2016; Reed & Jahre, 2019; VanScoy, 2019; West, 2018; Wiley et al., 2014), a broader understanding of improved access partnered with the idea of dynamic learning contexts (Andrade et al., 2011; Baker 2019; Bell, 2018; Grimaldi et al., 2019; Lashley et al., 2017; Pitt, 2015; Rivera et al., 2019; Schaffert, 2010; Waller et al., 2017) helps instantiate spaces in which content is localized to “improve the relevance of learning content to individual needs” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 25). OER can improve adult literacy as resources are adapted to increase their relevance to the learners, and learner engagement increases as they collaborate to develop “their own learning materials and encourage learners to support each other through collaboration and peer work” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 25).

### **Creative Commons Licenses**

The Creative Commons Licenses are layered over existing copyright to afford robust protection for both creators and those distributing or modifying subsequent iterations of a creative work (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019). One layer is intended to be human readable and includes an explanation of the license that is free of legal jargon (Creative Commons, 2020).

A second layer incorporates a legal description of the license sufficient for use in court (Creative Commons, 2020). The third layer is machine-readable, and when properly embedded into online digital resources, is discoverable by browsers for identification as a specific Creative Commons license (Creative Commons, 2020). While other licensing schemes are available for use in communicating 5R permissions, the Creative Commons Licenses remain the most widely used by those creating OER (Hess et al., 2016; Iakovakis et al., 2019).

By selecting and applying a Creative Commons license to their work, creators can clearly communicate the degree to which the 5R permissions may be applied (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019; Wiley et al., 2014). The Creative Commons licenses requires the original creator be attributed through every iteration of the work (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019; Wiley et al., 2014). Additional permissions give creators the opportunity to communicate the degree to which subsequent iterations can be modified and shared (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019; Mishra, 2017; Wiley et al., 2014). These permissions range from unlimited sharing for specific purposes with no changes made to the work through unlimited sharing for any legal purpose with unlimited changes to the work (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019; Wiley et al., 2014). Basic levels of permission are termed CC BY, CC BY SA, CC BY NC, and CC BY ND (Creative Commons, 2020; Iakovakis et al., 2019; Wiley et al., 2014).

**CC BY.** The CC BY level of permission requires only attribution (Creative Commons, 2020). Users may share and adapt the licensed resource through any medium or format (Creative Commons, 2020). Proper attribution will include a link to a description of the Creative Commons license and give credit to the original creator indicating what, if any, changes have been made (Creative Commons, 2020).

**CC BY SA.** The CC BY SA license communicates the creator’s request that users provide attribution to the original creator and share their work in alignment with the original creator’s desires (Creative Commons, 2020). Users may share and adapt the licensed resource through any medium or format (Creative Commons, 2020). They must distribute their edited version of the resource using the same license as the original (Creative Commons, 2020). Proper attribution will include a link to a description of the Creative Commons license and give credit to the original creator indicating what, if any, changes have been made (Creative Commons, 2020).

**CC BY NC.** The CC BY NC license communicates the creator’s intent that users provide attribution to the original creator and restrict the use of subsequent versions of the resource to non-commercial purposes (Creative Commons, 2020). Users may share and adapt the licensed resource through any medium or format (Creative Commons, 2020). The material may not be used for commercial purposes (Creative Commons, 2020). Proper attribution will include a link to a description of the Creative Commons license and give credit to the original creator indicating what, if any, changes have been made (Creative Commons, 2020).

**CC BY ND.** The CC BY ND license permits reuse of non-modified versions of the resource (Creative Commons, 2020). Users may share the unedited licensed resource through any medium or format (Creative Commons, 2020). While the resource may be modified for personal use, modified versions of the resource may not be published or distributed (Creative Commons, 2020). Proper attribution will include a link to a description of the Creative Commons license and give credit to the original creator indicating what, if any, changes have been made (Creative Commons, 2020).

The permissions described above allow for scenarios in which two or more resources released under different Creative Commons licenses may be modified or adapted to create one new resource (Creative Commons, 2020). Such instances require particular attention to the details

of each license (Creative Commons, 2020). Figure 5 illustrates how the licenses interact to communicate creator permissions (Creative Commons, 2020). The green check mark indicates compatibility between the licenses represented in the corresponding column and row. The dark X indicates incompatibility between the licenses represented in the corresponding column and row, precluding resources carrying those licenses from being combined (Creative Commons, 2020).

**Figure 5**

*Levels of permission allowed by interacting Creative Commons licenses*

	PUBLIC DOMAIN	PUBLIC DOMAIN	CC BY	CC BY SA	CC BY NC	CC BY ND	CC BY NC SA	CC BY NC ND
PUBLIC DOMAIN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
PUBLIC DOMAIN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
CC BY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
CC BY SA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
CC BY NC	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
CC BY ND	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
CC BY NC SA	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
CC BY NC ND	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

CC License Compatibility Chart / [CC BY 4.0](#)

**Summary**

In this chapter, I described academic libraries and academic library publishing in order to provide context regarding the academic library and associated publishing practices. Then, I presented cases from the literature, which describe academic library publishing programs, and the factors motivating each academic library’s involvement in OER publishing. Next, I situated the proposed dissertation study’s questions within the framework of Diffusion of Innovations Theory with a

particular focus on the role that knowledge gained by individuals and organizations plays in subsequent stages of the innovation-decision process. Finally, I detailed how OER is characterized in current research to provide information regarding their definition, description, and motivations for OER creation and use.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The focus of this qualitative case study will be to explore academic library enactment of academic library publishing programs. Specifically, this study explores the compatibility between open educational resources and academic library publishing. In this chapter, I outline the study method by presenting the research questions and outline the research design. I will also identify the target population, describe my strategy for data collection and analysis, and share the steps I took to ethically and responsibly conduct the research.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a perceived compatibility of values in academic library publishing with the values of Open Educational Resources (OER). This has led to academic libraries being the main publishers of OER materials at academic institutions. However, little information exist that show specifically how academic libraries publish OER materials and how they fit into existing publishing practices. As Rogers (2003) has argued, an incompatibility of values can influence the diffusion process. This study investigated how one academic library enacts academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process. The purpose of this study was to investigate how academic libraries enact academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education.



## **Research Questions**

As outlined in Figure 6 (see below), the research questions guiding this study were:

- How does the Midland State University Library enact its academic library publishing program?
- How does the Midland State University Library publish OER?
- Why does the Midland State University Library publish OER?
- What are the differences if any in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs its other academic library publishing?

## **Research Design**

This project used a descriptive qualitative case study research approach (Yin, 2019) to examine the compatibility of OER values, experiences and needs and academic library publishing values, experiences, and needs (Rogers, 2003). A descriptive case study is appropriate for research questions asking how or why (Yin, 2019), particularly when studying complex phenomena such as “organizational and managerial processes” (Yin, 2019, p. 5). Case study research is a mode of inquiry through which a particular contemporary phenomenon is studied in its real-life context using multiple sources of data (Gibbs, 2012). Gibbs (2012) described a contemporary phenomenon as an organization or group of people doing something now. The fact that the organization or group of people is doing something now enables study of the phenomenon in its real-life context – the researcher goes out to wherever the phenomenon is taking place as it is taking place (Gibbs, 2012). Rich data is gathered from multiple sources as the researcher interacts with people, documents, and artifacts as they operate in the actual context of the phenomenon (Gibbs, 2012).

**Figure 6**

*Data matrix outlining research question purposes and data collection strategies*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Data to Answer Question</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Contact for Access</b>	<b>Data Collection Timeline</b>
RQ1: How does the Midland State University Library enact its academic library publishing program?	To understand how the Midland State University Library enacts its overall academic library publishing program	Interview transcripts, document analysis	Interviews; university documents.	Digital Scholarship Librarian, Midland State University Library	May – September 2020
RQ2: How does the Midland State University Library publish OER?	To find out how the Midland State University publishes OER.	Interview transcripts, document analysis	Interviews; university documents.	Digital Scholarship Librarian, Midland State University Library	
RQ3: Why does the Midland State University Library publish OER?	To find out motivations influencing Midland State University publication of OER.	Interview transcripts, document analysis	Interviews; university documents.	Digital Scholarship Librarian, Midland State University Library	
RQ4: What are the differences if any in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs other work?	To find out if there are differences in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs other work.	Interview transcripts, document analysis	Interviews; university documents.	Digital Scholarship Librarian, Midland State University Library	

### **Qualitative Inquiry**

This research design included case study research using qualitative inquiry methods to explore how the Midland State University Library enacts its academic library publishing program. Qualitative inquiry “focuses on meaning in context” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 1). Qualitative inquiry methods attend not only to individual people but also to the systems through which they interact (Patton,

2015). The attention to context in qualitative inquiry make it appropriate for study of the Midland State University as a social system that has adopted an innovation (Patton, 2015; Rogers, 2003).

### **Case Study Research**

Case study research is appropriate for empirical study of a contemporary phenomenon in its authentic, real-life situation (Alpi & Evans, 2019; Yin, 2019). Case study research employs a systematically planned and implemented research design through which data is gathered from several different sources (Yin, 2019). The research design should include a clear description of the methods through which data will be gathered and analyzed, and the final product will be a write-up including a literature review, a detailed account of methodology, researcher findings and a discussion of the findings' significance to the field.

As with other qualitative research, in a qualitative case study, the researcher is the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Qualitative case study research has as its aim the development of understanding and uses a bounded system as its unit of analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Rogers (2003) urged for qualitative research to develop understanding of diffusion of innovations, advocating for methods such as in-depth interviews and on-site observations within the context of systems adopting innovations.

Use of qualitative case study research can provide understanding as it surfaces answers to questions asking how, why, and what (Rogers, 2003; Yin, 2017). Estes et al. (2014) employed qualitative case study research to answer the question, “How is teaching and learning currently conducted in STEM lab spaces?” (p. 91). They identified the people, practices, and technologies associated with a specific STEM lab space as the bounded system of study (Estes et al., 2014). To gather data, the researchers visited and observed the lab space and conducted interviews with people involved with the lab space. The data was analyzed by “organizing detailed findings into emerging categories” to provide insight into the ‘how’ question which was the focus of the study (Estes et al.,

2014, p. ?). Annan-Coultas (2012) used qualitative case study research to answer questions asking how and what in an exploration of student laptop use. The findings of the case study provided understanding of student perceptions of laptop use and improvements that could be made regarding student use of laptops (Annan-Coultas, 2012).

Hodgkinson-Williams and Paskevicius (2012) used qualitative case study research to ask what and how questions related to postgraduate students' co-authoring of OER. They conducted individual semi-structured interviews with postgraduate students involved in co-authoring OER. Following the interviews, Hodgkinson-Williams and Paskevicius (2012) emailed clarifying questions to the students. After the clarifying questions were answered, the recorded interviews were transcribed and sent back to the students for member checking. Emergent ideas were identified through a process of thematic coding . Answers to the what and how questions surfaced as the emergent ideas were categorized in relation to the theory framework informing the study design.

Qualitative case study research helped Raneri and Young (2016) answer questions such as 'what role', 'what challenges' and 'what lessons' associated with leadership strategies employed in creation of the Maricopa Millions OER Project Initiative. Raneri and Young (2016) gathered data through observations, discussions, and reviews of online materials, presentations and materials. As they reviewed presentations and materials, they took notes detailing strategies which "provided detailed information on the strategy used to develop and implement the program" (p. 584).

To answer the how, why, and what questions, which are the focus of this dissertation research, I used a single holistic case study research design with a context including one case, the Midland State University Library, as the unit of analysis (Yin, 2019). My selection of Midland State University Library was guided by the common case rationale, in which a case is selected based on insights about "social processes related to some theoretical interest" (Yin, 2019, p. 50). The Midland

State University Library is representative of the “circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation” (p. 50), in this case, the typical academic library publishing house.

The Midland State University Library is a context where the publication of OER is in the process of diffusion in that the academic library publication of OER is still distinctively apparent (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) advocated for research designs incorporating investigation into a system as diffusion is underway as a way to gain understanding of decisions made regarding how the innovation is implemented and the relationship of the innovation to the practices it may replace. I gathered data through interviews with those presently involved with the academic library publishing program (Yin, 2019), documents, and personal reflections (Glesne, 2016). These methods are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Qualitative case study research is an effective methodology for diffusion of innovations studies (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) proposed that qualitative research methods could help further understanding of the diffusion of innovations in relation to the social system into which they are adopted. Greater understanding of the function of OER publishing in relation to academic library publishing can minimize undesirable consequences (Rogers, 2004). In depth case study research of Midland State University Library publishing will provide greater understanding of how publication of OER functions in the academic library publishing social system (Rogers, 2003).

### **Procedures**

The following section outlines the criteria I used to select the case, specifies my data collection methods, and details strategies for analysis of the collected data. I close the section by describing how I am adhering to ethical standards for research.

## **Case Selection**

The case selected for study is an academic (four-year research) library publishing program actively providing support and infrastructure for the development and publication of OER. The library is the main campus library of a public institution, which offers undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs. It is a primary stakeholder in the publishing process, empowered to set policy regarding its publishing practices.

The Midland State University Library is an academic library publishing program intentionally incorporating publication of OER. The organization has deliberately chosen to develop and implement a program supporting the development and publication of OER. The Midland State University Library has articulated reasons informing its choice to publish OER.

## **Criteria for selected case**

The Midland State University Library is a member of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), a coalition of academic and research libraries located primarily in the United States and Canada that promotes and supports activities and programs working toward improving global access to information. The academic library's membership in SPARC suggests familiarity with the values of open and OER. The Midland State University Library is a member of the Open Textbook Network, a networked community of higher education institutions whose membership fees support advocacy for OER as well as the curation and review of OER textbooks. The library's membership in the Open Textbook Network suggests active involvement in OER spaces and communities.

The Midland State University Library's publication of OER has support from administration, faculty and instructors, and students. Broad support generated from multiple sectors suggests an established program that can take risks, has autonomy in setting its own goals, and can determine for itself metrics for evaluation of success (Kleeymeer et al., 2010).

I used the Library Publishing Directory, a resource published by the Library Publishing Coalition to serve as “a resource for and about the wider community of library publishers” (Schlosser et al., 2017, p. 1) to select the Midland State University Library as an academic library that fit the criteria established above. Matthew Upson, Associate Dean of Research and Learning Services for the OSU Libraries, provided a letter of introduction. I followed up with a letter of my own inviting participation as well as with an email to determine their willingness to participate in the project.

### **Data Collection**

Words are data in qualitative research studies. The practice of qualitative research connects the “causal dots through unfolding patterns that emerge” (Patton, 2015, p. 87), from words as data. These data are collected from interview transcripts, observations, documents and artifacts, conversations, and reflection (Bindewald, 2019; Glesne, 2016; Patton, 2015). For this dissertation I collected data from documents and interviews.

### **Interviews**

Interviews provide an opportunity to partner with participants in the development of information (Patton, 2015). Patton suggested that effective interviews can take us “inside another person’s life and worldview,” helping us “make sense of the diversity of human experience” (Patton, 2015, p. 426). Rogers (2003) advocated for interviews as a means to “see an innovation through the eyes of their respondents” (p. 116). Interviews with participants were conducted via Zoom. As I conducted interviews with those involved with the Midland State University Library publishing program, I placed a priority on interacting with participants in ways that supported and fostered the formation of our emerging relationships (Patton, 2015). I combined a conversational strategy “within the interview guide approach” (Patton, 2015, p. 441). This combination of strategies afforded the flexibility needed to explore a variety of subjects in varying degrees of depth (Patton, 2015).

The goal of each interview process was (1) to determine how the Midland State University Library enacts its academic library publishing program, (2) to determine how the Midland State University Library publishes OER, (3) to determine why the Midland State University Library publishes OER and (4) to determine what, if any, differences there are in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs how it publishes other work. Each interview included similar inquiries (Patton, 2015), using questions along the lines of those included in Appendix D. The questions were adapted from a diffusion of innovations qualitative case study for which they were designed “based on components of diffusion of innovations theory” (Walker, 1999, p. 6).

### **Documents**

I gathered data from documents associated with the Midland State University Library publishing program. Documents are “written or recorded materials” which have not been specifically prepared because of or for the research project (Bindewald, 2019, slide 9). This dissertation research project reviewed documents related to the development and implementation of the Midland State University Library publishing program (Raneri & Young, 2016). My exploration of documents associated with the Midland State University Library publishing program provided context, helped me discover information about the program’s past library publishing practices, and allowed me to track changes that may have taken place (Bindewald, 2019). Documents reviewed for this dissertation were publicly available online.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process through which research questions are answered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data collection and analysis take place concurrently in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research designs integrate analysis with data collection to produce “believable and trustworthy findings” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 190) through interactive, iterative, and dynamic processes. Researcher insights and hunches developed during simultaneous collection



and analysis of data guide subsequent phases of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described all qualitative data collection and analysis as inductive and comparative “in the service of developing common themes or patterns or categories that cut across the data” (p. 297). The “meanings, understandings, and insights” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 202) which result from data analysis give form to study findings presented as descriptive accounts describing themes or categories present across the data. This dissertation project used thematic analysis to analyze data gathered from interview transcripts, documents and artifacts, conversations, and reflection (Bindewald, 2019; Glesne, 2016; Patton, 2015).

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is appropriate for use in educational work (Glesne, 2016). Glesne (2016) described one of the strengths of thematic analysis as its “ability to help reveal underlying complexities” (p. 184).

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that since thematic analysis is appropriate for use with many theoretical frameworks rather than being aligned with a single, “pre-existing theoretical framework” (p. 82), researchers clearly communicate to readers choices made prior to data analysis. These questions include consideration of the epistemology undergirding the analysis, determination of “what counts as a theme” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82), to what extent a detailed description of the data will be shared, and whether the researcher will use inductive or theoretical thematic analysis. Although the answers to these questions are not always shared in the methods sections of research reports (Braun & Clarke, 2006), transparency regarding my answers to these questions can help contextualize my analysis. Before I began analysis of the data, I considered each of these questions.

First, I considered the epistemology undergirding my analysis. As discussed in Chapter 1, this project was informed by a constructionist epistemology, which holds that meaning is constructed

through interaction with other people and the world (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Crotty, 1998). Thematic analysis from a constructionist perspective identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns in data which illuminate “sociocultural contexts and structural conditions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). I used Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) as the lens through which I made sense of the data.

Next, I considered what would count as a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of thematic analysis includes recognition of patterns and regularities in the data which can then be sorted into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2006) defined a theme as capturing “something important about the data in relation to the research question” (p. 82). This “something important” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) can represent prevalence of the pattern and regularities within data items (each individual source) or across the dataset (all of the data used for analysis). To answer the question “what counts as a theme” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82), I chose to count prevalence of a pattern or regularity in each data item, defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as data collected from each individual source. A pattern or regularity in each data item formed a “patterned response or meaning within the data set [that] captures something important about the data in relation to the research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82).

Then, I reflected on whether my research questions would be best answered through a rich description of the entire data set or a detailed account of one aspect of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend this question be considered in light of the type of analysis desired and the claims the research wants to make. Rich description of an entire data set can provide readers a sense of what and how themes surfaced throughout (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This overall perspective can be valuable for areas in which the amount of research is growing (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since academic library publishing of OER is an area of growing research, I chose a rich description of the entire data set as the approach appropriate for research questions I sought to answer (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The fourth question Braun and Clarke (2006) present as essential for consideration prior to analysis of data concerns whether the thematic analysis will be inductive or theoretical. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined inductive analysis as coding of data without the influence of “a pre-existing coding frame” (p. 83). Theoretical analysis is closely tied to features specific to a theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend recursive use of both inductive and deductive analysis in a systematic process informed by the purpose and orientation of the study. I determined that, in relation to the question posed by Braun and Clarke (2006), analysis of the data for this dissertation project would be primarily inductive, with Diffusion of Innovations Theory used as a lens through which meaning is made of patterns I discerned in the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Coding and Themes**

While there is no one specific way to conduct thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), Braun and Clarke (2006) presented an outline helpful in developing a systematic process for data analysis. This outline includes six phases, each of which includes strategies specific to that phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The phases begin with developing familiarity with the data, followed by initial code generation. During the third and fourth phases, the researcher searches for and reviews themes. Themes are defined and named in the fifth phase, and the sixth phase describes creation of the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The six phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) are similar to the data analysis process described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Like Braun and Clarke (2006), Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested beginning the analysis process by gaining familiarity with the data. Subsequent steps include open coding and axial coding, after which codes from each individual source are compared to previous codes to begin the process of category construction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Categories are expanded or merged throughout the process, eventually becoming named themes representative of the theoretical framework (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The final

report consists of narrative descriptions and/or themes illustrating patterns and regularities discerned in the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data analysis for this dissertation used a systematic process of data collection and analysis at the level of the information source while the data collection process was underway, with patterns and regularities identified at each step of the analysis informing the following step of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Once data collection and initial iterative analysis had been completed, I analyzed data collected from participant interviews using the six-step thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Patterns and regularities from this thematic analysis were organized into themes, which were responsive to my research questions.

### **Outline of Procedures**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) advocated for early creation of a structure for the organization and management of the data, or case study database. Before beginning data collection, I created a structure for the organization and management of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To facilitate data collection and analysis, I created folders associated with each step of the process I planned to undertake. I used the following folder titles:

- Documents/Transcripts
- Jottings/Field Notes/Observer Comments
- Units of Data
- Memos
- Open Codes (Groupings)
- Axial Codes (Connected Groupings)
- Categories
- Merged Analysis.

I created templates for each step of the process (see Appendix F). To ensure systematic enactment of the process of data collection and analysis I planned to use, I populated each of the templates with

descriptions of each step or phase as represented by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). To facilitate regular, intentional review of the purpose of the study, I populated each of the templates with my dissertation purpose statement and research questions. I began a document titled ‘Essmiller\_Researcher Notes’ to serve as a master file in which I could note activities and decisions throughout the data collection and analysis process and from which I could provide links out to other items in the case study database (see Appendix F). As I moved through the data collection and analysis portion of my project, I used the templates to create documents for each information source (see Appendix F).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that qualitative analysis begins with the very first information source. Data is initially collected and analyzed at the level of the individual information source (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data from the individual information source is then analyzed in comparison to previously gathered and analyzed data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The steps described below incorporate analysis of data at the level of the individual information source as well as the ongoing analysis of overall data.

I began analysis of data collected from individual sources by familiarizing myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I read and re-read associated documents, transcripts, and audio recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As I read, I interacted with the data by asking questions and jotting comments about what I found that might be relevant to the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These jottings comprised an “initial list of what is in the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88) and captured what I thought was interesting about them. Once I felt familiar with the content and had made jottings identifying things of particular interest, I went back through and extracted units of data that were responsive to my research questions and might provide “potential answer or part of an answer” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 202) to those questions. Each unit of data was heuristic and the “smallest piece of information” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203) that could be understood out of the context of the overall transcript or document.

Having gained familiarity with the data and extracted units of data, I wrote a memo to help note “reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things to pursue” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 196) that arose from my interaction with the data up to this point. Writing each memo helped me consider the data in relation to Diffusion of Innovation Theory, my research questions, and, as the study progressed, data collected and analyzed at earlier stages of the project (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used these memos to help me consider and articulate my next steps in data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

After writing the memo, I began the process of coding my data, defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as “organizing your data into meaningful groups” (p. 88). I returned to the units of data and compared one unit of data with the next to identify “recurring regularities” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 203) present in the data. During this step I noted anything of interest, open to the idea of anything becoming a pattern (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and grouping the data accordingly. Next I reviewed the open groupings using to document and group codes that seemed to go together into axial codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), using my previously-written research memo and thoughts captured in my research notes to help me center the Diffusion of Innovations lens as I considered connected groupings. I titled each of the connected groupings using categories congruent with Diffusion of Innovations as the theoretical framework of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I then populated the categories document with the axial code titles (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the study progressed, I kept a separate, running list of categories, which I compared to previous and subsequent data to merge, add, or eliminate categories as appropriate (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the final steps of the data analysis process, I considered each of the themes in relation to both themselves, each other, and the study research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006), comparing, organizing, and refining the themes. I defined each theme, using terms from Diffusion of Innovations Theory capture the “essence of what each theme” was about (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92).

## **Ethical Considerations**

In keeping with the tenets of the responsible conduct of research, I protected confidentiality and obtain informed consent. I presented a plan for my project to the IRB in which I detailed the procedures through which I planned to engage in the responsible conduct of research. This plan included a list of the questions planned for use in the interviews and specified my intent to follow those types of questions. I engaged in member checking by sharing interview transcripts with my participants, including specific questions for their review.

## **Trustworthiness**

In case study research, researchers strengthen the trustworthiness of their work through articulation of how the researcher affected the phenomena under study as well as the impact of the research process on the researcher (Probst & Berenson, 2014). Without shifting attention away from the phenomenon of study (Probst & Berenson, 2014), I acknowledge my positionality in this research process in which the researcher was central to data collection and analysis, “investigative strategy, and the end product” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37).

I acknowledge my role as an academic OER librarian at a university with a library publishing program and my resulting professional and practical interest in the values and practices of academic library publishing programs. To guard against my unknowingly influencing the work, I selected and analyzed data based on its relevance to my line of inquiry (Yin, 2018). I created a set of questions helping remind me “of the data to be collected and why” (Yin, 2018, p. 99). I created a list of sources which might contain useful evidence and followed the crosswalk method described by Yin (2018) through which case study researchers determine the relevance of potential evidence in relation to the “question of interest” (p. 99).

## **Credibility**

I established credibility of my work through triangulation. Triangulation strengthens the work's internal validity, helping readers see connections between the research shared and the actual world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Triangulation in qualitative research may be approached by combining "several different qualitative methods" (Denzin, 2010). I compared what was said in interviews to what I read in documents to triangulate through "use of multiple methods of data collection" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 244). Additionally, I triangulated through the use of multiple data sources, such as several conversations with the same person so that I could increase credibility by "comparing and cross-checking data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 244).

## **Transferability**

Transferability is the extent to which discoveries in one context can be considered applicable to another (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described transferability as "a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts" (p. 124). Employing the use of "rich, thick description" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 256) in describing settings and participants increases the reader's ability to determine transferability. I used direct quotes from my participants and, in my writing and description, included rich details to preserve for the reader the context of each experience and facilitate the reader's ability to step into the experience and transfer what is recounted to other settings and situations.

## **Summary**

This project used case study research through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory to explore academic library publishing policies and practices. Case study research allowed me to study contemporary academic library publishing practices in context.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The focus of this study was to explore academic library enactment of academic library publishing programs. This study used document analysis and semi-structured interviews to collect the data with a thematic analysis as the data analysis approach. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions with the data collected from the document analysis and interviews. Data from document analysis and participant interviews were analyzed according to the method described in Chapter 3. This chapter is organized into two parts. In the first part, I share a description of the interview participants. The second part describes the findings of the analysis presented with the research questions in association with the themes that emerged through analysis of the data.

#### **Participant Descriptions**

**Participant 1.** Aaron is a white male who started working for Midland State Libraries in Fall 2015 and holds the rank of assistant professor. He is the scholarly communications librarian and director of the Midland State Libraries' Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS).

CADS provides library and technical support for Meadow Press and M-Rex. Meadow Press is the OA publishing arm of Midland State University Libraries, and M-Rex is the Midland State institutional repository into which faculty, students, and others in the Midland State University community can place their open access scholarly publications. Aaron holds an undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies and a Master's degree in Library and Information Science. His published work includes presentations at scholarly conferences describing the Midland State Libraries Open Access fund, and both presentations and publications detailing the use of institutional repositories to showcase faculty scholarly output. I became aware of the Aaron and his potential role in Midland State University Library publishing and Midland State Library publishing of OER via the Midland State Library website. Aaron is also familiar to me through mutual colleagues as KSU Libraries and OSU Libraries are both members of the Greater Western Library Alliance, a consortium of research libraries in the United States .I considered him a valuable resource for this project because, as the scholarly communications librarian, he was most likely of the faculty represented on the Library website to be involved in Midland State Library publishing of OER.

**Participant 2.** Hazel Grace is a white female who started working for Midland State Libraries in Spring 2020 and holds the rank of assistant professor. She is the scholarly communication and copyright librarian and is faculty in the Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS). In her role with CADS, Hazel Grace provides faculty support and instruction regarding copyright, scholarly publishing, and OER. She helps lead the Midland State Open and Alternative Textbook Initiative (OATI), serving as the Libraries' point person in OATI administrative and creative partnerships with faculty and students. Hazel Grace holds an undergraduate degree in English and history from Kalamazoo College, a Master of Science in Information from the University of Michigan and is working toward a certificate in museum studies from the University of Michigan. She has contributed articles to 'Copyright Lore,' a digital collection published by the U.S. Copyright office. She has also collaborated on digital humanities archive projects and co-authored and published a

book of fiction about a bookstore owner's life changing quest to save his bookstore. I first became aware of her association with Midland State Libraries' publication of OER via a press release on the Midland State Library website. In addition to information available on the website regarding her role, I considered her to be a valuable resource because Aaron suggested I talk with her as well as him to find information regarding Midland State Library publishing and Midland State Library publishing of OER.

**Participant 3.** Deanne is a white female who started working for Midland State Libraries in 2004 and holds the rank of professor. She is the Dean of Libraries for Midland State University. In her role as Dean of Libraries, she is responsible for administering the libraries in alignment with Midland State policies and procedures. Midland State libraries include Hale Library, the Math/Physics Library, and the Paul Weigel Library of Architecture, Planning and Design. Deanne holds a Bachelor of Science in English and a Master of Science in English from Illinois State University, and an Master in Library Science from Rosary College (Dominican University). She has published work discussing library safety and security, librarian impact on community stakeholders and fulfillment of libraries' missions, and the experiences of women in librarian positions. I became aware of her role with Midland State Libraries via the Midland State Library website. I considered her to be a valuable resource because both Aaron and Hazel Grace suggested her as someone else whom I should talk to in order to find information about KSU Library publishing.

## Results by Research Questions

### **RQ1: How Does the Midland State Library Enact Its Academic Library Publishing Program?**

The purpose of this question was to explore how the Midland State Library enacts its academic library publishing program. The analysis led to the identification of two themes which are presented in detail below.

**Theme 1: The Midland State library publishing platforms are integral to the publishing program.** Analysis of data revealed that one of the ways Midland State Library enacts its library publishing program is by providing platforms that make it possible for members of the community to share their work. This was evident by the way all three interview participants initially named specific platforms when responding to questions such as “How does the Library publish?” For instance, Deanne responded to the question “How does the Midland State Library publish OER?” with the answer, “Through Meadow Press.” Aaron referred to the Midland State Research Exchange as one of the ways Midland State enacts publication of scholarly work, and Hazel Grace referred to “what we’re doing with the Meadow Press.”

The Library website highlights both Meadow Press and the Midland State Research Exchange as options through which those in the Midland State community can publish their scholarly and creative work. Meadow Press is an online open access publishing platform administered by the Midland State Library, and the Midland State Research Exchange is the online institutional repository administered by the Midland State Library. The intent of both platforms is to broaden access to information and enhance institutional prestige by elevating the visibility of work accomplished by the Midland State community.

The Midland State Research Exchange broadens access to information as a central publishing location providing free access to work of the Midland State community. The Midland State Library website says the repository works “in concert with traditional publishing” by providing publishing opportunities for article pre-prints and works whose licensing permits green archiving. Additionally, the Midland State Library website suggests that publication in the repository can help “satisfy funder requirements for public dissemination of grant generated research results.” As a repository with a direct university affiliation, the Midland State Library website indicates the Midland State Research Exchange can also provide a publishing home “for grey information . . . important to scholars . . . not typically published in traditional channels.”

Meadow Press is another of the Library-provided publishing platforms available for dissemination of the work of scholars associated with Midland State. Deanne said that Meadow Press is built on an Open Access model; it is defined on the Midland State Library website as provision of “free, immediate online access to research and scholarly information.” Distribution of information through OA models, such as is employed by Meadow Press, is framed on the Meadow Press website as a pushback against the commodification of information. Hazel Grace described the role of library publishing through Meadow Press as a way to make the “dream of diamond open access a reality” through library subsidization of journal publication.

Both Meadow Press and the Midland State Research Exchange carry Midland State University branding and are intentionally branded separately from the Library. This appears to be an important aspect to those interviewed. For example, Deanne shared that, in the initial proposal for Meadow Press, the librarian felt it was important that Meadow Press be seen as a “Midland State thing . . . [and] stand on its own as a brand.” Aaron, in a member check of the participant description, corrected a description of the Midland State Research Exchange to make clear its branding as separate from the Library. Hazel Grace made a similar correction during a member check, requesting revision of “KSU Libraries’ Open and Alternative Textbook Initiative (OATI)” to read “Midland State

University's Open and Alternative Textbook Initiative (OATI)." Meadow Press has its own, non-library affiliated social media account, the affiliation with the Midland State Library is not readily apparent on the platform's website, and the email address listed as the contact gives the implication that either Meadow Press is its own entity within the university and not just a component of the library.

All three interview participants viewed Midland State Library publishing activity as connected primarily to the institution rather than to the Library itself. Hazel Grace described the publishing as "connected, really, to the institution," as did Aaron, who said, "The publishing activity is just more connected to the institution." Deanne described the genesis of Meadow Press as the Library's response to Midland State as an institution not having a university press, stating, "Our response to not having a University Press was to start an Open Access publishing arm of the library" through which the library could "bring scholarly publications to as broad an audience as possible."

**Theme 2: Midland State has an established network that facilitates and promotes its Library publishing program.** The Midland State Library is engaged with networks and individuals on and beyond campus which support its provision of publishing opportunities to the Midland State community. On campus, network engagement includes interaction within the organizational structure of the Library as well as interaction with campus organizations outside the Library. Networks beyond campus include organizations such as Digital Commons and BePress, which help provide technical and platform support for Meadow Press, as well as the Open Education Network and the Library Publishing Coalition, which provide support for advocacy and communication.

Engagement with on-campus networks has played a key role in the genesis and development of Midland State Library Publishing. Both Meadow Press and the Midland State Research Exchange are operated by the Midland State Library's CADS. Aaron recounted the beginning of the Midland State Research Exchange, saying, "We started up our repository back in around 2004," but as he was

not then with the Library, he did not have details regarding how and why it began. Meadow Press started in 2007, when the dean approved a proposal presented by one of the Midland State Librarians. Aaron observed that, when he joined the Library in 2015, “We already had our publishing processes down as well as a dedicated staff.” Meadow Press was overseen for many years by the coordinator of electronic publishing, a library faculty member who “had been at Midland State for some time,” according to Deanne, but has since “retired and re-retired.” Additional changes to the organizational structure of the Library have left current operation of Meadow Press and the Midland State Research Exchange to be undertaken primarily by Aaron and Hazel Grace. Deanne said, “We are short staffed right now, which is making it a little bit of a challenge to do more promotion and solicit more things for the press. But that I hope is just a temporary glitch. We’ll be able to fill another position in this next year.”

The Library partners with networks and individuals on and beyond campus to provide publishing opportunities for the Midland State community. The Meadow Press website states, “In addition to scholarly works, we work with campus units to publish special publications and alternative textbooks.” For journal publication in Meadow Press, the Meadow Press website says, Library “works hand in hand with the editors [to] navigate setup work associated with creating a new journal.” The journal editors themselves are responsible for copy editing and managing the review process. Meadow Press also publishes “full-text conference proceedings and associated content” and provides for automated submission of research associated with select conferences and journals. Meadow Press added solicitation and publication of monographs to its publishing practices in 2014.

## **RQ 2: How Does the Midland State Library Publish OER?**

The purpose of this question was to explore how Midland State Library publishes OER. The analysis of data led to the identification of two themes: Theme 1: Publishing of OER is accomplished through

established platforms, processes, and partnerships; and Theme 2: The OER publishing program is in a state of rapid change. The themes are presented in detail below.

**Theme 1: Publishing of OER is accomplished through established platforms, processes, and partnerships.** OER published by the Midland State Library are housed on a variety of platforms, including Meadow Press, iBook Creator, Pressbooks, and Canvas. Creation and publication of OER in partnership with Midland State Library takes place as part of OATI, which is an initiative that avails grants to Midland State faculty and instructors to encourage the creation and adoption of alternative resources to traditional print textbooks. Midland State Library publication of OER and administration of the OATI began and continues as a partnership between the Midland State Library and Midland State faculty outside the Library.

**Platforms.** There is no single platform on which the Library publishes OER. In response to the question “How does the Midland State Library publish OER?” Deanne answered first by naming a platform on which the Midland State Library publishes OER, saying “We publish through Meadow Press . . . a lot of OER products that people have created, they have gone ahead and put into Meadow Press.” According to Hazel Grace, OER created by faculty as part of the OATI are “launched into the classroom” and housed on a number of platforms, including iBook Creator, an instance of Pressbooks that “is publicly available but not well advertised on our website,” and faculty’s individual Canvas courses. Some OER go on to be published “very formally” on Meadow Press in a process described by Aaron as including “a little bit more standardization,” particularly with regards to accessibility.

**Processes.** Aaron spoke of processes involved in Midland State Library Publishing of OER as having been established for some time, saying, “OER publishing was a part even when I came on board . . . it’s existed in some form or another for quite a number of years” and that continued efforts have “grown out of some of the skills and services that we had already been building,” such as copyright and open access initiatives. When Aaron joined the Midland State Library he said, “We already had



our publishing processes down as well as a dedicated person in that area.” Aaron referenced the “OER grant program that started in 2013, so around 2015 and 16 . . . that program was then transitioning from just plain grants and some OER publishing” and attributed the program’s “escalating . . . growth curve” in part to the institution of an “open educational resource fee for students” that helps fund continued grants.

**Partnership.** Midland State Library publication of OER was described by Hazel Grace as “really through the grant, and through the application process.” Hazel Grace administers the OATI and said that part of what drew her to accept a position with the Midland State Library was the fact that through their established OER publication processes “Midland State’s managed to do it at scale . . . our open alternative textbook initiative has been astounding.” She then described the role of the OATI in facilitating creation of OER published by the Midland State Library and the partnerships which began OATI. According to Deanne, “The Open Alternative Textbook Initiative is really, from our end of it, a funding model to help support faculty who are transitioning their curricular materials to open textbooks.” OATI began as a collaboration among two Midland State faculty members and a now retired Midland State Library faculty member. Deanne said, “The three of them were the initiators of the Open Alternative Textbook Initiative” and stated that now “we’ve got a vital program and it has gotten the attention of more and more faculty each year.”

Hazel Grace described developing partnerships through communication of opportunities for faculty to explore creation of OER in conjunction with the OATI. Hazel Grace said she intentionally draws connections between faculty’s existing practices and potential development of OER: “We do these information sessions and they see that there is stuff out there for their field, or they know that they’ve been pulling our articles and writing their own content . . . they’ve been contributing to textbooks for decades, and there’s just this concern of how to make that all happen and the best way to do it.” Speaking specifically “in terms of how we publish them,” Hazel Grace stated, “They complete the grant application. They send us a copy of their final thing. We look for any glaring errors, or ways

to suggest to continue to make it open . . . they submit a final report . . . and then they get the second half of the award money and they use the resource.”

Part of how the Midland State Library partners with others to publish OER is described by Hazel Grace as “the administrative side,” including coordination of the OATI grant cycle reviews. Grant applications are evaluated by a panel, which includes Hazel Grace, the non-Library faculty members who helped initiate the OATI, and student representatives. Hazel Grace spoke of the involvement of non-Library faculty members and student representatives as important partnerships that help facilitate Library outreach to faculty and provide insight “advocacy wise of the student perspective.” Hazel Grace emphasized these partnerships, saying “The very fact that the Open Alternative Textbook Grant started with faculty partnering with the library with student input from student leadership . . . is a real testament to the significance of OER in publishing at Midland State.” Speaking of the involvement of others in the Library, Hazel Grace offered “a huge shout out to our Library finance team and central administration” responsible for tracking courses using resources funded by the OATI and handling dissemination of funds to grant recipients.

**Theme 2: The OER publishing program is in a state of rapid change.** This theme references the perception from participants that they are involved in a constant state of change. When asked how the Midland State Library publishes OER, Aaron explained, “You’ve really had us at a transition period,” referencing the impact of recent personnel changes on Midland State Library publishing workflows. Deanne said the Midland State Library is “short staffed right now, which is making it a little bit of a challenge to do more promotion and solicit more things for the press, but that I think is just a temporary glitch,” anticipating being able to fill another position in the next year. Hazel Grace responded, “I think it’s changing, and rapidly.”

Aaron, when discussing OER as part of Midland State Library publishing, stated that since he “came on board . . . we’ve kind of branched off.” He said, “We really needed somebody to shepherd

the open alternative textbook initiatives.” That position, according to Aaron, “was imagined” as someone who could lead copyright initiatives as well as “champion [and] grow these services” as “we decided to move in the direction of Pressbooks and supporting OER in other areas.” This role was filled when Hazel Grace was hired in Spring 2020 to a position described by Deanne as “on the OER side of things.” Although, according to Deanne, the Library remains short-staffed, the addition of Hazel Grace has allowed for revision and change to the Library’s compressed publishing workflow.

One of the changes underway since the hiring of Hazel Grace includes identification of Pressbooks as a future preferred platform for ongoing Midland State Library publication of OER. Faculty continue to be able to choose on which platform they wish to have their work published, but Hazel Grace said emphasis will be given to the Pressbooks platform because of its “ease of use [and] excellent documentation.” Hazel Grace is also in the process of refining how OATI Grant recipients submit their final report. Rather than requesting grant recipients submit an unstructured one- to two-page reflection on their experience, Hazel Grace plans to invite recipients to answer questions such as, “What were the difficulties with the project? What was the most successful aspect? How did students relate to the platform?” According to Hazel Grace, answers to those questions will be used to help the Library provide enhanced support and design effective advocacy as Midland State Library publication of OER works toward a “clearly defined publishing future.”

### **RQ 3: Why Does the Midland State Library Publish OER?**

The purpose of this question was to explore why Midland State Library publishes OER. This analysis led to three reasons as to why Midland State Library Publishes OER: 1) the Library has existing publishing infrastructure; 2) Publication of OER aligns with the Midland State land grant mission; and 3) Publication of OER enhances the institutional reputation of Midland State. The three themes are presented in detail below.

**Theme 1: OER is published by the Midland State Library because of the Library’s existing publishing values, competencies, and infrastructure.** The data gathered indicate that one of the reasons that the Midland State Library publishes open educational materials is because there is already existing publishing infrastructure in places. The Midland State Library incorporated publication of OER into the infrastructure developed for the Meadow Press open access publication of scholarly work. Aaron stated, “In terms of library publishing and OER . . . we don’t have a clear line of . . . the founding reason why we do what we do.” Publication of OER is, according to Aaron, “part of a broader strategy” for addressing steadily increasing costs by “changing the paradigm from subscription to open access.” Deanne spoke of the role of Midland State Library scholarly communications librarians in promoting open access and OER. She said she thought publishing OER was something the Midland State Library should do because “one way to promote it was to demonstrate it ourselves . . . to show how it's done,” continuing on to say “from a cost benefit side of things . . . it was worth doing and worth investing in.”

Because of the competencies they have developed to support OA publishing, the Midland State Library scholarly communications librarians’ roles have been extended to include publication of OER. The librarians have skill sets and experience in partnering with faculty and promoting open access, which are seen as effective in supporting Midland State Library publication of OER. Hazel Grace said that publication of OER was a “natural fit with the copyright component, and licensing component of my work.” For instance, Hazel Grace described consulting with faculty hoping to reduce the cost of course materials by using texts which could be accessed through the Library ProQuest database: “I’m sitting here as a librarian saying, that’s assuming that ProQuest is something we can afford to keep.” Her existing skills and experience help her work with faculty asking, “How do I do this?”

**Theme 2: Publication of OER aligns with the Midland State land-grant mission.** One of the reasons the Midland State Library publishes OER is because of the perceived alignment of OER

publication with the Midland State mission as a land-grant institution. Deanne, answering a question about factors that led her to buy-in to the Library's publication of OER, stated, "Meadow Press and the open textbook initiative both fit in nicely with the land grant's outreach and access mission." She said she thought that alignment was present because "the textbook initiative is seen not just as an access issue but as an affordability one." Hazel Grace said that Midland State Library publication of OER "touches . . . the land grant mission of Midland State," and because of the Midland State land-grant mission, the Library has an "elevated responsibility not only to our students but [also] our community."

Included in the Library's elevated responsibility, according to Hazel Grace, is the dissemination of information "in the most equitable format and sharing [of] that expertise." Aaron referenced the Library's publication of OER as a way to equitably disseminate information, saying, "Especially with COVID and even before, there's a recognition that . . . the cost increases across the board for educational resources have just gone up too much." In publishing OER, Hazel Grace said, the Library works "with the funds we have . . . to maximize costs and benefits for students."

Faculty also bought into the land-grant mission aspect of the publishing program through addressing cost. Deanne said that the Library's publication of OER "helped develop relationships with some of our faculty in a different way." Describing faculty concern regarding the cost of course materials, Hazel Grace said, "We are all on the same page but our positions give us different stakes in it." Deanne shared that the Library is able to "fill a void in a different space than faculty have perceived it as being" as faculty don't "think of [the Library] as a publisher." In selecting which OER projects to fund for publication, Hazel Grace said the Library "looks at things like course size . . . how frequently it's offered . . . [and] willingness of others in the department teaching sections of that course to collaborate." Faculty relationships provide insight regarding how the use of OER shapes the classroom, an influence Hazel Grace said helps provide needed balance.

### **Theme 3: Publication of OER enhances the institutional reputation of Midland State.**

The institutional reputation of Midland State is enhanced by Midland State Library publication of OER. Hazel Grace highlighted this by saying that Library OER publications are “home grown for us in our community and helps us shine that way.” She said that part of the reason she applied for the OER/scholarly communications librarian position at Midland State was “how impressive the program is, how fast it’s taken off and the passion behind it.” When asked her perception of what others thought of Midland State Library publishing of OER, Deanne responded, “People outside of campus, other libraries know about it because we get asked how we do it, how we manage the funds, how much money people give, [and] where the money comes from.”

Hazel Grace referenced Midland State Library publication of OER and its potential for attracting students from an institutional perspective: “As an institution . . . I think it’s hey, higher ed is expensive, students are complaining, look at these two-year studies that show success with these, this seems like a good idea.” Aaron said, “The higher ups within our IT as well as the . . . chief information officer, they’re saying OER is the future.” A campus decision has designated funds generated by the Midland State March 2021 Giving Day for support of the OATI, which Deanne said indicates “the University administration and the Foundation are supportive of what we’re doing.” Aaron stated, “When we’re talking about the future of resources for higher education at Midland State, OER is the future.”

### **RQ 4: What Are the Differences, if any, in How the Midland State Library Publishes OER versus Its Other Academic Library Publishing?**

The purpose of this question was to explore what differences, if any, exist in how the Midland State Library publishes OER. This analysis led to the identification of two themes, which are presented in detail below.

**Theme 1: There is overlap between how the library publishes OER and non-OER academic material.** When discussing Midland State Library publication of OER and its other academic library publishing, Hazel Grace stated, “It’s weird, because there’s some overlap.” The overlap results from use of much of the same infrastructure, including platforms and personnel, to enact both OER publishing and other academic library publishing. Hazel Grace described considering “how we see Meadow Press and this OER initiative blending,” stating, “They overlap quite a bit and then they don’t.” Deanne said, “There is kind of an overlap between the open textbook [initiative] and Meadow Press . . . some of the textbooks that the faculty have done through the open alternative textbook initiative” are published on Meadow Press. Hazel Grace mentioned the possibility that the overlap caused some confusion, saying, “OER and OA mean different things inside and outside the library and inside and outside of higher ed.” Aaron, however, said, “The open alternative textbook has done great at getting that message out” regarding distinguishing between open access and OER.

**Theme 2: The Library collaborates with faculty and students throughout OER creation and publication projects.** The collaboration between the Midland State Library, faculty, and students through which the Midland State Library enacts publication of OER stands in marked difference to how the Library enacts its other academic publishing. Where the Library’s other academic publishing generally includes works that have undergone creation and external review separate from Library processes prior to publication, the Library is involved throughout OER creation and publication projects. Hazel Grace said, “OER are published really through the grant,” and since “these are grant funded and associated with the institution,” she feels a responsibility for making sure they are “truly open.” According to Deanne, the OATI grants provide “summer money,” an incentive described by Hazel Grace as “supplemental summer pay” for faculty who might not otherwise be able to devote time to creation of the resource. The student/faculty review panel that selects OER grant recipients is coordinated by the Library and described by Hazel Grace as “five or six of us sitting down and really looking at what’s being offered.” The Library’s direct involvement throughout OER creation and

publication projects positions Midland State as being “on that cusp of really making OER at some point the norm rather than the exception,” according to Aaron, who continued to say, “I think, at least, that’s the future that I hope we’re building towards.”

There are also differences between Midland State Library publication of OER and the Library’s other academic library publishing regarding how, when, and where the work is considered published. Non-OER Midland State Library publications are housed on Meadow Press or the Midland State Research Exchange, platforms optimized to facilitate discovery and collect and communicate usage statistics. Deanne said, in reference to work published on Meadow Press, “We keep good stats on usage of the titles on Meadow Press, so we can tell you how your book has done with actual data.” Hazel Grace described OER, seen as primarily pedagogical resources, are published “not like a traditional, I wouldn’t even call it published and say, they’re launched into the classroom.” Some OER projects completed through the OATI are housed only in faculty Canvas accounts. Hazel Grace hopes some of those projects will be published in the Midland State Library Pressbooks instance by faculty who want the material provided for their course but don’t “need to go ahead and have a lot of exposure.” The Pressbooks option is presented by Hazel Grace to faculty as available for OER publication “with never going that extra mile to have it formally published.” Faculty who wish to have their completed OER projects published on Meadow Press may do so. Meadow Press has a specific section devoted to open and alternative textbooks. Hazel Grace said her goal once a publishing coordinator is hired would be to encourage sharing of “as many of these open, alternative resources that are actual OER . . . on a better platform than just in the classroom” so they would be available for use by others beyond “the walls of Midland State.”

## **Summary**

The purpose of chapter four was to present data gathered from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Themes discerned through analysis of the data provide insight into how the Midland State



Library enacts its publishing practices, how the Midland State Library publishes OER, why the Midland State Library publishes OER, and what, if any, differences there are between Midland State Library publishing of OER vs its other academic library publishing practices.

The Midland State Library publishing platforms are integral to the publishing program, and it has an established network that facilitates and promotes its publishing programs. The Midland State Library uses established platforms, processes, and partnerships to publish OER. Recent changes in personnel are leading to changes in how the Midland State Library publishes OER. The Midland State Library publishes OER in part because of competencies and infrastructure established to facilitate open access publications. The Midland State Library also publishes OER because of its perceived alignment with the Midland State land grant mission and to enhance the institutional reputation of Midland State. Because of its use of existing publishing infrastructure to publish OER, there is overlap between how the Midland State Library publishes OER vs how it enacts its other academic publishing. Differences exist in that the Library collaborates with faculty and students throughout OER creation and publication projects, as well as consideration of how, when, and where the OER is published.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The goal of this dissertation study was to investigate how one academic library enacts academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. This chapter discusses the study's findings as viewed through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) and in the context of current literature. This chapter will also review the implications of the study's findings and share suggestions for future research.

#### **Summary of Research**

This dissertation study focused on academic library publishing as enacted by the Midland State University Library. Three Midland State Library faculty members involved in Midland State Library academic publishing were interviewed. The limitation to three was a result of the COVID19 pandemic and is discussed in further detail in the limitations section of this chapter. The faculty member initially contacted for an interview was the head of CADS. Additional interview participants included a recently hired scholarly communications librarian whose responsibilities include administration of the Midland State OATI Grant, and the Dean of Midland State Libraries.

Participants were interviewed online via Zoom. The interview questions asked were along the lines of those included in Appendix D. The questions were “based on components of diffusion of innovations theory” (Walker, 1999, p. 6) and served as a means for the participants to share their perceptions regarding the attributes and value of their personal experiences with Midland State

Library academic publishing and their perceptions regarding the attributes and value of Midland State Library publishing of OER. The goal of each interview process was to (1) determine how the Midland State University Library enacts its academic library publishing program, (2) determine how the K-State University Library publishes OER, (3) determine why the Midland State University Library publishes OER, and (4) determine what, if any, differences there are in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER versus how it publishes other work. The data from each data source was analyzed using an iterative process of open and axial coding, which facilitated discernment of regularities and patterns in the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data from all three interview participants was then analyzed using a six-step process for thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### **Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses findings from this dissertation research project's investigation of how academic libraries enact library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. The findings explain how the Midland State Library enacts academic publishing, how the Midland State Library enacts publication of OER, why the Midland State Library publishes OER, and what, if any, differences exist between how the Midland State Library publishes OER and how the Midland State Library enacts other academic publishing. This qualitative case study provided insight into how Midland State Library academic publishing is perceived by Library faculty involved in its enactment.

#### **Midland State Library Academic Publishing**

The first research question posed by this dissertation research study was, "How does the Midland State Library enact its academic publishing program?" The first theme indicated the Midland State Library provides university-branded platforms supporting publishing opportunities for the advancement and dissemination of work by the Midland State community. As reflected in Chapter 4,

participants referenced the centrality of the Midland State Research Exchange and the Meadow Press to the publishing program. The platforms are distinct because they are built on an OA model. Meadow Press particularly was seen as a way to make the “dream of diamond open access a reality” through library subsidization of journal publication.

These findings are consistent with library academic publishing as represented in the literature. Academic library publishing supports the library’s role of “embrac[ing] open and accessible information sources for users” (Anderson et al., 2019, p. 2) by providing a place for content publication (Sandy et al., 2018). Midland State publication of student work and conference volumes on Meadow Press and publication of faculty preprints on the Midland State Research Exchange align with description in the literature of the academic library’s goal “to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works” (Brown, 2013, p. 470). Facilitation of improved access to resources used for research and education is central to the purpose of the academic library (Kleymeer et al., 2010).

One difference between these findings and what is found in the literature is the reason for implementation of an academic library publishing program. The literature indicated that increasing cost and access restrictions have “encouraged libraries to explore alternative options for sharing scholarly research” (Sandy et al., 2018). The Midland State Library, however, began its academic publishing program with Meadow Press as a response to the University not having a university press. The Meadow Press was intentionally conceived as an OA press so the work of Midland State scholars could be available to as many people as possible; however, provision of access to scholarship does not appear be the original problem or need (Rogers, 2003) resolved through the creation of Meadow Press. Instead, the original problem or need appears to be related to institutional prestige, such as that which comes from having a university press.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation presented information about the standards that must be met in order for a university press to be defined as such. An academic press that meets those standards can enhance the reputation of the institution with which it is affiliated. It seems, then, that creation of Meadow Press was a response to Midland State not having a university press and was intended to fill that gap in prestige. It is possible, since Midland State Library began and continues Meadow Press as an OA press, that the problem or need was, in fact, that the Library wanted to provide increased access to the work of the Midland State community. Review of the original proposal for Meadow Press might provide insight. Unfortunately, due to the 2018 Hale Library fire as well as COVID-19 pandemic displacement, a copy of the proposal was not available. If the founding purpose was provision of broader access, that purpose did not get communicated in a way that superseded its having been started because there was no university press.

Why does the original problem or need that informed the genesis of Meadow Press matter in this study? Rogers's (2003) description of the innovation-development process indicated that innovations result from "research and development activities" (p. 137) begun in response to a perceived problem or need. The idea, or innovation, is then developed based on the needs of future users. If, in this case, the need was related to institutional prestige, then enhanced institutional prestige is what would have been prioritized in the design and function of Meadow Press. Chapter 4, as well as the discussion of findings later in this chapter, surfaced the centrality of Meadow Press in both Midland State Library publishing overall and Midland State Library publishing of OER. If OER are being published on Meadow Press the same way other scholarly work is being published, then, rather than being its own innovation, publication of OER may be an extension of the innovation-development process whose perceived problem or need resulted in the formation of Meadow Press; one of the consequences of the perceived compatibility of Meadow Press and OER may be that OER ends up being the same as other work published by Meadow Press. This may be acceptable to Midland State Libraries, but if publication of OER is intended to be an innovation developed in

response to a problem or need other than institutional prestige, the potential conflation of OA and OER resulting from use of the same publishing platform could muddy the waters.

The second theme that emerged in association with this research question is that the Midland State Library engages with networks that facilitate and promote Library publishing platforms. The study found that these networks can be seen in the organizational structure of the Library as well as in the Library's outside partnerships. The Midland State Libraries maintain membership in both the Library Publishing Coalition and the Open Textbook (now Education) Network. This theme resonates with what Diffusion of Innovations Theory states regarding the role of interorganizational networks in the diffusion of innovations. Rogers (2003) stated, "Innovations can diffuse from organization to organization through interorganizational networks" (p. 319). Opinion leader organizations recognized as "competent and trustworthy" (Rogers, 2003, p. 318) reduce uncertainty associated with a new idea by conveying their evaluation of the innovation. Viewing the findings of this study through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory suggests that the Midland State Library's interorganizational engagement may impact their academic library publishing activities.

Rogers (2003) explained that innovations diffuse through interorganizational networks the same way they diffuse through individuals in social systems. Organizations with high levels of interorganizational engagement may be more innovative; likewise, individual organizations can be opinion leader organizations (Rogers, 2003). Organizations reduce uncertainty associated with an innovation by observing opinion leader organizations' interaction with the innovation. As with individual social systems, the observed experience of an opinion leader organization can be incorporated into the observing organizations' innovation-decision decision process. Rather than moving independently through the innovation-decision process described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, observing organizations may choose to adopt an innovation based on their observation of opinion leader organizations' use of the innovation. This can lead to unnuanced knowledge or understanding of the innovation.

One example of this can be seen in my own practice as OER Librarian at Oklahoma State University (OSU). In conversations with each other and with me, Library administration and communications faculty not directly involved with OER publishing rarely differentiate between OER and OA. For instance, the OSU Libraries recently issued a press release describing a grant we received for design and implementation of an OER project. In a direct quote of my description of OER as democratizing access to knowledge creation, OER was misstated as OA. At the time I proofread the release, the quote was accurate. From me, however, it went on to be proofread by Library administration and the Library grant writer, and somewhere along the way, the quote was altered to say OA rather than OER. The OSU Libraries' having adopted academic library publication of OER came about in large part because of what administrators observed taking place at opinion leader organizations. As a result, they do not fully possess the knowledge of what OER is, why it is implemented, and how it might most effectively be used – a knowledge gap that results in their conflating OER with OA. As suggested above, this conflation is not problematic if the original problem or need leading to adoption of OA and OER publishing are the same; however, if they are different, attention should be given to how the problem or need leading to adoption of OER is different from that which led to adoption of OA. This difference can then be reflected in the innovation-development process as well as the eventual implementation of the innovation.

### **Midland State Library Publishing of OER**

To develop understanding of Midland State Library publishing of OER, this dissertation research study asked, “How does the Midland State Library publish OER?” and “Why does the Midland State Library publish OER?” Although the newly-hired scholarly communications librarian is envisioning several changes to the Midland State Library OER publishing workflow, the Midland State Library currently publishes OER through established platforms, processes, and partnerships. These, along with Library competencies and publishing infrastructure are one of the reasons the Midland State Library has taken on publication of OER. Existing competencies, publishing infrastructure, and

perceived resonance with the role of the academic library are reasons represented in the literature for why academic libraries publish OER. Use of existing publishing infrastructure makes Midland State Library publishing of OER “logistically convenient” (Kleymeer et al., 2010) and resonates with the role of the academic library (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Jung et al., 2017; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019). Advocacy, education, and administration of OER publishing fall within the purview of the libraries’ scholarly communications departments already equipped for OA publication (Bell, 2018; Hess et al., 2019; Kleymeer et al., 2010; Reed & Jahre, 2019; Sandy et al., 2018; VanScoy, 2019), which is similar to what has taken place with the Midland State scholarly communications librarians and CADS.

Use of existing platforms, skills, and services means that publication of OER has been influenced by the platforms and workflows used for other types of scholarly publication, determining how and why the Midland State Library publishes OER. Some of the potential challenges resulting from this overlap are discussed above. Of note here is the fact that, with the addition of Hazel Grace, Midland State Library publishing of OER has entered a state of rapid change. Diffusion of Innovations Theory sheds light on the role of Hazel Grace in this rapid change in at least two ways. Considering the role of organizational structure in the diffusion of innovations, the impact of the 2018 Hale Library Fire as well as the COVID-19 pandemic figure very prominently. An organization is a group of like-minded individuals working toward a common goal (Rogers, 2003). Organizations with stable communication partners achieve these goals more efficiently; however, Rogers (2003) stated that the stability of bureaucratic structure does not lend itself to innovation. Innovation is more likely to take place when those involved are able to escape “routine organizational procedures” (Rogers, 2003, p. 149). Rogers’s claim is in reference to skunkworks but can transfer to changes to the stability of the Midland State Library bureaucratic structure resulting from the escape from routine organizational procedures forced upon them first by the fire, and as they were recovering, again by COVID-19. It was during the process of reimagining what the post-fire Library would look like that



the OER-specific role, now occupied by Hazel Grace, was established. This position provided organizational slack in terms of a position that would provide uncommitted resources. Hazel Grace was hired and then given space to focus on OER and how best to support its creation and publication.

Second, viewing the placement of Hazel Grace's position on the Midland State Library organizational chart through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory can help provide insight as to why and how she has been able to envision and plan to enact changes to Midland State Library publication of OER. According to Rogers (2003), champions of an innovation who are lower in an organizational hierarchy tend to be "more innovative [with] their new product" (p. 146). There are several layers in the organizational structure between Hazel Grace and the Dean of Midland State Libraries. This relatively low level in the organizational hierarchy may be helpful in giving Hazel Grace the space necessary to re-invent Midland State publishing of OER.

Additional reasons for Midland State Library publication of OER include its alignment with the Midland State land-grant mission and because Midland State Library publication of OER enhances the institutional reputation of Midland State. As mentioned in Chapter 4, all of the interview participants felt the Midland State land-grant mission carried with it a commitment to serving the community beyond Midland State. This sense of alignment between OER publication and the land-grant mission echoes what is said in the literature regarding institutions whose community extends beyond campus stakeholders into the surrounding counties and state ("Land-Grant University", n.d.). Enhancement of institutional reputation as a reason for publication of OER is also supported in the literature, which suggests that a university might implement publication of OER to improve the way others view its brand (Jung et al., 2017; Sandy & Mattern, 2018).

### **Midland State Library Publishing of OER versus Other Academic Publishing**

The final research question presented in this dissertation research study was, "What are the differences if any in how the Midland State Library publishes OER versus its other academic library

publishing?” The study findings were that there are both similarities and differences in how the Midland State Library publishes OER versus its other academic library publishing. As noted in the literature, there are instances when the boundaries between OER and other academic library publishing are blurred (Baker & Ippoliti, 2019). There is overlap between Midland State Library publishing of OER and other scholarly materials that aligns with the perceived overlap between OER and OA discussed by Bell (2018) and Reed and Jahre (2019). Differences exist, however, between the findings of this study and the way the perceived overlap is addressed in the literature. While the literature explored for this dissertation research study discussed perceived overlap between OER and OA in the library itself, those interviewed for this dissertation appear to be speaking of the overlap as perceived by those outside the Library rather than within the Library publishing program itself.

The differences in Midland State Library publishing of OER versus its other academic publishing were found to be primarily because of the OATI Grant. The Library’s role as administrator of the OATI grant positioned it as directly involved in the OER creation and publication process. The OER projects are funded by and directly associated with the institution throughout the creation and publication life cycle, which makes them different from academic work that has undergone external peer review and is published as part of Midland State Library’s other academic publishing. Literature describing academic library publishing of OER frequently describes the role of grants and financial incentives in helping sustain OER publishing programs (Allen et al., 2014; Delimont et al., 2016; Lashley et al., 2017; Pitcher, 2014; Schlosser et al., 2017; Smeltekop, 2014; Walz, 2015), but this has not yet surfaced in the literature as a meaningful difference in how OER publication differs from other academic publishing.

### **Implications**

This dissertation study described the Midland State Library publication of OER. Additionally, this study also considered the ramifications that it has on the diffusion of OER in higher education. As

described in Chapter 1, Diffusion of Innovations Theory provides a lens through which researchers can make meaning of the innovation diffusion process whereby ideas are socially communicated over time (Rogers, 2003). This process may begin with an innovation development process during which a problem or need is recognized for which a solution is sought (Rogers, 2003). Individuals or organizations considering adoption of an innovation undergo what Rogers (2003) described as an innovation-decision process, through which they seek to reduce uncertainty associated with adoption of the innovation. During the innovation-decision process, individuals or organizations gain knowledge about the innovation, form an opinion about use of the innovation in their local context, decide whether to adopt or reject the innovation, put the innovation into use, and finally gather information again to determine whether or not to continue using the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

This study found that Midland State Library publishes OER using many of the same processes they use to publish scholarly communication. While the use of the existing academic library publishing values, competencies, and infrastructure is convenient, one question that arises is, do these overlaps in publishing result in changes to OER? Moreover, with many academic libraries publishing OER, how are academic libraries ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER? According to Diffusion of Innovation Theory, as organizations adopt and implement innovations, “both the innovation and the organization change in important ways” (Rogers, 2003, p. 403). It is possible the overlap found in the ways the Midland State Library publishes OER and non-OER materials may result in unanticipated consequences (Rogers, 2003).

Midland State Library publication of OER began in 2014 when the Meadow Press added solicitation of monographs to its publishing practices. Meadow Press publication of monographs at that time included books or textbooks labelled OER, but that inclusion was not in response to a clearly-documented problem or need. This study found that, according to the interview participants, Midland State Library publishes OER because doing so through the Library is logistically convenient, it aligns with the land-grant mission, and because it enhances institutional prestige. It appears

publication of OER is seen as compatible with Meadow Press, an innovation whose implementation was originally in response to a problem or need related to the absence of a Midland State University Press. As mentioned in Chapter 1, perceived compatibility is an attribute that affects the adoption and diffusion of an innovation (Allan & Wolf, 1978); high levels of perceived compatibility “with a previously introduced idea” (Rogers, 2003, p. 244) can lead to misadoption. The perceived compatibility between Midland State Library publishing of OER and the “previously introduced idea” (Rogers, 2003, p. 244) of OA publishing through Meadow Press could cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of OER (Chtena, 2019) as well as changes to the organization itself (Rogers, 2003). This has implications for OER and academic libraries publishing OER.

### **Implications for OER**

Overlaps in Midland State Library publishing practices for OER and non-OER materials may lead to unforeseen changes in OER. A conceptualization of OER developed by David Wiley, a prominent figure in the OER movement, helped shape understanding in terms of users’ ability to legally retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute the materials (Wiley, n.d., Wiley, Bliss & McEwen, 2014). OER that Midland State Library considers published is housed primarily on Meadow Press. Users may legally retain, reuse, and redistribute materials on Meadow Press; however, the platform does not readily facilitate revision or remix. OER that Midland State Library considers launched is housed in faculty Canvas accounts. These resources may be available for access and legal interaction through Canvas Commons but are not by default accessible to those without Canvas accounts. Use of these platforms inhibits others’ ability to customize OER for localized use, something seen as a key characteristic of OER (Wiley et al., 2014). Use of existing publishing platforms may be convenient, but academic libraries considering doing so for publication of OER may find that they are producing work more akin to the work already published rather than implementing an innovative practice or idea. Producing and publishing work that is inaccessible to users outside a given system is not a

practice or idea new to higher education. Making work free and editable by those within the given system is still denying access to those outside the given system. It may look like OER to those in the system, but to those outside the system for whom the barriers prevent access, it very clearly is not.

### **Implications for Academic Libraries**

Rogers (2003) stated that organizations may change as they adopt and implement innovations. Implementation of an OER publishing program has resulted in change to the Midland State Library. As the OER publishing program has grown, the Midland State Library expanded its publishing team to include someone whose role is specific to the support of services related to OER creation and publication. The addition of this position increases the Library's ability to attend to the specifics of OER. As is evident by the changes being introduced by Hazel Grace, having a publishing team member whose role and research are specific to OER allows for separation of OER from other publishing practices. Workflows can be designed that complement goals unique to OER publication. Platforms can be incorporated that facilitate iterative sharing and modification of OER. There may still be overlap, but as Hazel Grace stewards the OER publishing program, she can ensure that OER is not being changed to conform to publishing practices associated with existing ideas, such as OA publication. Those changes include the addition of Pressbooks, a publishing platform specifically designed to facilitate widespread, customizable access to created materials. Hazel Grace is also planning development of a creation and publication workflow for OER that is separate and distinct from the workflow used for Library publication of non-OER materials.

The main implication suggested by this study's findings is that, if academic libraries are to enact the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to its conception, those involved will need to be intentional about ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER. This can perhaps be accomplished by development of familiarity with how OER and academic library values align and how the characteristics of OER can help achieve those values in unique ways. As that familiarity is

developed through assignment of someone whose role is stewardship of the academic library OER publishing program, academic libraries may need to reconsider the platforms on which they publish OER as well as the workflows through which they support its creation.

### **Limitations**

This study had two limitations with potential impact on the study findings and my ability to effectively answer the research questions posed. The first limitation is in regard to my use of a single case. Single case studies are found in OER research literature, but findings of a single case study research project do not generalize to a broader population nor are they effective for testing hypotheses (Joseph et al., 2019). This single case study research project has provided data for those seeking understanding of Midland State Library publishing; although the findings can be used to generate hypotheses and questions to be explored in future projects, this study does not suggest that its findings are applicable to other academic library publishing programs.

The second limitation is in relation to restrictions in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the then-emerging COVID-19 pandemic, Oklahoma State University prohibited any out-of-state travel related to the institution during the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2020 semesters. During that same time frame, the Oklahoma State University Office of Research Compliance prohibited gathering data through direct face-to-face interaction. Additionally, many academic libraries provided only distance services in Spring and early Summer 2020, and once physical Library services resumed in late Summer 2020, many academic library faculty continued to work from home. As a result, interviews for this study that were originally intended to take place face-to-face were conducted virtually, and member checks and follow-up conversations took place over email. A strength of the original study design was the in-context study of Midland State Library publishing practices. Changes imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic changed the context of the study from on-site at Midland State University to virtual interviews undertaken from both mine

and the participants' homes. While the context in which the data was gathered was similar to the context in which Midland State Library faculty members were interacting with each other at the time of the interviews (they were working from home), it does not accurately represent the context of their interactions absent the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews on the physical campus of Midland State might have yielded more contextual information, and interactions taking place between Library faculty not also making their way through a global pandemic might have produced richer experiences specific to academic library publishing.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study suggest several opportunities for future research. The first and perhaps most obvious would be a comparative case study research project. Such a project would ask questions similar to those in this study of other academic library publishing programs. A multiple-case study design could provide insight as to what extent the findings of this dissertation might transfer to similar institutions as well as help generate additional insight into academic library publishing practices.

Further research could explore how opinion leaders and attributes of innovations impact academic library publishing of OER. Diffusion of Innovations Theory indicates that as individuals and organizations seek to reduce uncertainty associated with implementation of an innovation, they may turn to opinion leaders for help during the knowledge and persuasion stages of the decision process (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) found that organizations could serve as opinion leaders, and that opinion leader organizations' observable use of an innovation could meet trialability needs for organizations considering adoption of the innovation. Research into academic library publishing of OER using a survey instrument could explore the influence of opinion leader organizations on academic library implementation of OER publishing programs and the ramifications that has on the diffusion of OER.

Another possible area of research has to do with the impact of organizational structure on the diffusion of innovations. For instance, the impact of the May 22, 2018, Midland State Hale Library fire as well as the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizational structure of Midland State Library may have affected the diffusion of the Library's publishing of OER. Future research could explore how organizational slack and changes in communication networks resulting from unanticipated events impact the diffusion of academic library publishing of OER. The answers to this and similar questions will be of particular interest as academic libraries, as well as other organizations, continue to navigate challenges associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



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## APPENDIX A

### Letter of Introduction

**From:** Upson, Matt <[matthew.upson@okstate.edu](mailto:matthew.upson@okstate.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:02 PM  
**To:** Ryan Otto <[rwotto@ksu.edu](mailto:rwotto@ksu.edu)>  
**Cc:** Essmiller, Kathy <[kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu)>  
**Subject:** Dissertation on Academic Publishing - Introduction to Kathy Essmiller

Hi Ryan,

I am writing to introduce Kathy Essmiller. She is the Oklahoma State University Libraries Open Educational Resources Librarian, and is part of the Research and Learning Services team which reports to me. She also serves as the Academic Library Liaison to the School of Music and the Department of Theater and Dance.

In her role as our OER Librarian, Kathy advocates for and supports OER adoption, adaption, and creation in the OSU community. She is also active in state-wide initiatives, and is currently serving as the co-chair for the Oklahoma Council for Online Learning Excellence OER subcommittee. She is an OpenEd Group Research Fellow, and has also been selected as a member of the Global OER Graduate Network. **I am introducing her because Kathy's dissertation research is exploring academic library publishing practices in general, as well as academic library publishing of OER.** She would welcome the opportunity to visit with you and others as you suggest regarding publishing practices at Kansas State University.

I've copied Kathy ([kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu)) on this email and I hope that you might have the time to share with her, as time permits. Please let me know if I can answer any questions. I appreciate your time, help, and expertise!

Sincerely,

Matt Upson



**MATT UPSON**  
**ASSOCIATE DEAN, RESEARCH & LEARNING SERVICES**  
University Libraries  
405.744.9755 • 221 Edmon Low Library • [library.okstate.edu](http://library.okstate.edu)



APPENDIX B

Letter Requesting Participation

Kathy Essmiller  
Open Educational Resources Librarian  
306 Edmon Low Library  
216 Athletic Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
[kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu)

August 7, 2020

Ryan Otto  
Digital Scholarship Librarian  
Academic Services  
2123 Business Building  
Manhattan, KS 66506

Dear Ryan,

My name is Kathy Essmiller. I am the Open Educational Resources Librarian for the OSU Library. In addition to that role, I am a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University. I am writing to ask the Kansas State University Library Publishing Program to be the case of interest for a research case study on the values and practices of an academic library publishing program. This research case study is part of my dissertation research, which is being completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Technology.

I am grateful to Matt Upson for providing a letter of introduction. I am reaching out to you because I believe the Kansas State University Library Publishing Program provides a representative case of academic library publishing.

Please contact me by replying through email to [kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu), or by phone at (405)641-2401 (cell) or (405)744-9772 (office). You may also reach me by mail at 306 Edmon Low Library, 216 Athletic Avenue, Stillwater, OK, 74078. Thank you for considering participating in this project.

Sincerely,

Kathy Essmiller

## APPENDIX C

### Consent Documents

#### Consent Document

School of Education, Foundations, Leadership and Aviation  
Kathy Essmiller, Principal Investigator  
Academic Library Publishing Policies and Practices

You are invited to participate in a study examining “Academic Library Publishing Policies and Practices”. Kathy Essmiller, Open Educational Resources Librarian at Oklahoma State University and a doctoral candidate in the Educational Technology doctoral program at Oklahoma State University, is conducting the study under the supervision of Dr. Tutaleni Asino, dissertation committee chair.

I am providing the following information for you to determine if you wish to participate in this study. You are free to decide not to participate in this project and/or to withdraw at any time without it affecting your relationship with the researchers, the field, or Oklahoma State University.

The purpose of this study is to explore the guiding values and practices of academic library publishing programs. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to participate in an interview via Skype. Interviews will be audio recorded using an external microphone to ensure the accuracy of the collected information. All interviews will be transcribed into a written record. You will be able to ask the interviewer to turn off the audio recording equipment at any time during the interview. During the interview, the researcher will take written notes regarding setting appearance, acts, events, processes, and talk taking place. You will be able to ask the researcher to discontinue taking notes at any time during the interview.

You are welcome and encouraged to ask questions about the study before participating or while the research is underway. I will be happy to share the results with you at the completion of the study, and you are welcome to see data collected in relation to your interview. I will also welcome your input regarding my analysis of data collected during your interview. Protecting the confidentiality of gathered data is the norm in research best practices. I will not use your name or the name of your school and associates in the dissertation dissemination process or in subsequent presentations and publications. I will use pseudonyms to reference specific people.

Records will be stored at Oklahoma State University – Stillwater. I will store digital records on a password-protected computer in a locked office in Edmon Low Library. Printed records will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office in Edmon Low Library. The written transcripts will be stored for six years after the transcript is created. I will permanently delete the audio transcripts once the transcription process has been completed, a written record produced, and you feel confident that the written transcript accurately represents your interview comments. There are no known risks or discomforts beyond those experienced in everyday life associated with participation in this study.



Approved: 05/28/2020  
Protocol #: IRB-20-242



There are benefits to society expected because of this study, which may inform further studies regarding academic library Open Educational Resource publishing policies and practices and inform future studies clarifying the goals and values of practices involving Open Educational Resources.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Kathy Essmiller at (405)641-2401 (cell phone), by email at [kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu), or by mail at Edmon Low Library, 216 Athletic Drive, Stillwater, OK, 74078. You may also contact the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board by phone at (405)744-3377 or Tataleni Asino by phone at (405)744-8003 or via email at [tataleni.asino@okstate.edu](mailto:tataleni.asino@okstate.edu).

This consent document has been approved for use by the researcher for X years by the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board.

A signed copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

*Tataleni Asino*  
Participant

8/18/2020  
Date

Consent obtained by: *Kathy Essmiller*  
Interviewer

8/18/2020  
Date



Approved: 05/28/2020  
Protocol #: IRB-20-242

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School of Education, Foundations, Leadership and Aviation  
Kathy Essmiller, Principal Investigator  
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This consent document has been approved for use by the researcher for X years by the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board.

A signed copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

Emily J. Finch  
Participant

08/18/2020  
Date

Consent obtained by: Kathy Essmiller  
Interviewer

8/18/2020  
Date



Approved: 05/28/2020  
Protocol #: IRB-20-242

## Consent Document

School of Education, Foundations, Leadership and Aviation  
Kathy Essmiller, Principal Investigator  
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Protocol #: IRB-20-242

There are benefits to society expected because of this study, which may inform further studies regarding academic library Open Educational Resource publishing policies and practices and inform future studies clarifying the goals and values of practices involving Open Educational Resources.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Kathy Essmiller at (405)641-2401 (cell phone), by email at [kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu), or by mail at Edmon Low Library, 216 Athletic Drive, Stillwater, OK, 74078. You may also contact the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board by phone at (405)744-3377 or Tutaleni Asino by phone at (405)744-8003 or via email at [tutaleni.asino@okstate.edu](mailto:tutaleni.asino@okstate.edu).

This consent document has been approved for use by the researcher for X years by the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board.

A signed copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

*Lou Gorken*  
Participant

8-27-2020  
Date

Consent obtained by: *Kathy Essmiller*  
Interviewer

8/27/2020  
Date



Approved: 05/28/2020  
Protocol #: IRB-20-242

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Questions Keyed to Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Walker, 1999)

#### Knowledge

1. How did you find out about academic library publishing of Open Educational Resources (OER)?
2. How does the KSU Library publish OER?

#### Persuasion

3. What was your first reaction to academic library publishing of OER? Did you think it was something Kansas State University Library could do?
4. How do you feel about Kansas State University Library publishing of OER?

#### Decision

5. What factors led you to buy in to or not buy in to Kansas State University Library publication of OER?

#### Implementation

6. How long after you heard about academic library publishing of OER was it implemented by Kansas State University Library?

#### Confirmation

7. Has the decision for the Kansas State University Library to publish OER been a good decision or a bad decision? Why?

#### Relative Advantages

8. What are the relative advantages or disadvantages at Kansas State University Library publishing of OER vs other methods of publishing OER?

### Compatibility

9. Is publication of OER compatible with the needs and goals of Kansas State University Library?

### Complexity

10. Do you consider Kansas State University Library publication of OER to be complex? If so, what influences you to buy into it despite its complexity?

### Trialability

11. Was the KSU Library able to experiment with OER publication before adopting it?

### Observability

12. What do others think of KSU Library publishing of OER?

### Consequences

13. Would you describe the results of KSU Library publishing of OER as beneficial, not beneficial, or both?
14. Do these results have a direct or indirect on KSU Library Publishing? On OER?
15. What are some of the anticipated and unanticipated results of KSU publishing of OER?

## APPENDIX E

### IRB Letter



#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 05/28/2020  
Application Number: IRB-20-242  
Proposal Title: Academic Library Publishing of Open Educational Resources

Principal Investigator: Kathy Essmiller  
Co-Investigator(s):  
Faculty Adviser: Tataleni I. Asino  
Project Coordinator:  
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt  
Exempt Category:

#### Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

**This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.**

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,  
Oklahoma State University IRB



## APPENDIX F

### Case Study Database Excerpts

[Researcher Notes](#)

[Document/Transcript Template](#)

[Jottings/Field Notes/Observer Comments Template](#)

[Units of Data Template](#)

[Memo Template](#)

[Open Codes \(Groupings\) Template](#)

[Axial Codes \(Connected Groupings\) Template](#)

[Categories \(Template\)](#)

[Running Comparison, Subsuming, Adding, etc. Template/Master](#)

[Open Codes Folder](#)

[Axial Codes \(Connected Groupings\) Folder](#)

[Categories Folder](#)

VITA

Kathy Essmiller

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: ACADEMIC LIBRARY PUBLISHING OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL  
RESOURCES

Major Field: Education

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Learning, Design and Technology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December/, 2020.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Educational Technology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Music in Trumpet Performance at University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in 2007.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Music Education at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas in 1991.

Experience: OER Librarian/Music, Theatre, Dance Academic Liaison, Oklahoma State University Libraries, 2018 – Present; K12/HS/MS Band Instructor, various, 1991-1996, 2008 – 2016. Higher Ed Band Instructor, 2011 – 2013; OSU EDTC GRA. 2017=2018; OSU Libraries GRA, 2018=

Professional Memberships: Association for Educational Communications & Technology, American Educational Research Association, Association of Learning Technologies, International Council for Open and Distance Education, National Association for Music Education, ITG,